



INSTITUTE OF
SISTERS of MERCY
OF AUSTRALIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Orientation to Mercy (self-paced) Workbook



The Scriptural quotations used in this booklet are from the New Revised Standard Edition.

This formation resource was first developed for the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea in February 2021 for use by staff new to the Institute and its ministries. On December 3, 2021, *Mercy Ministry Companions*, a ministerial public juridic person, was established, so this updated resource will also be of benefit to those new to *Mercy Ministry Companions* and its ministries.

January 2025.

ABOUT ORIENTATION TO MERCY

The *Orientation to Mercy* program was originally designed for staff new to the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISMAPNG) and its incorporated ministries, a number of whom transferred to *Mercy Ministry Companions* (MMC) on December 3, 2021. The program is, however, also suitable for those for whom the mercy charism is a core component in their roles, including those from non-ISMAPNG or MMC ministries and schools with a Mercy heritage.

The *Orientation to Mercy* (self-paced) is an 8-module program, with each module designed to take 30-40 minutes. The program was adapted from the one-day *Orientation to Mercy* seminars that were held face-to-face in early 2020. Whilst in-person seminars always bring an added dimension to education and formation, i.e., the ability to interact, network and share stories with the presenter and other participants, bringing people together physically is not always possible or feasible.

The eight topics covered in the Modules are;

- the story of Catherine McAuley, the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, and the sources of inspiration for the work she did
- the early expansion of the Sisters of Mercy
- the *Works of Mercy*, their scriptural basis, and the traditional and contemporary manifestations of these.
- *Care for Our Common Home* (the 8th Work of Mercy) and the interconnectedness of the *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*
- The brief history of the Sisters of Mercy in Australia and Papua New Guinea and the formation of ISMAPNG
- ISMAPNG's ministries
- Mercy Ministry Companions and its ministries
- The wider Mercy family & Mercy Values

Education and formation are not just about receiving input or even mentally processing what has been heard or read. It also involves some critical reflection on the resource material, engaging with it from the head, heart and spirit, being open to new insights. Ideally, formation also moves us into action. As such, each of the modules includes input, short activities and reflective questions.

At the start of each 30-40 minute module, there is a short video clip which provides information about the module. Within the body of the module, there are links to video clips and websites which relate to the focus of the module. There are also suggested short activities and reflective questions for consideration.

At the end of each module is a prayerful reflection. Central to being Catholic are the questions about the ways God is revealed through what we are seeing and hearing, how what we see and hear can strengthen our relationship with God, and the ways we are invited to respond. If you are not Catholic or are unfamiliar with the Christian tradition of prayer and reflection, you are invited to take this time to think about the points in the module which have made an impact on you.

You will need online access whilst participating in this program as there are several links to video clips and websites to which you will be directed as key resource material.

It may also be useful to print out a copy of this document so that you are able to write down your responses to the reflective questions whilst engaging with the content. It is also hoped that the links contained will be useful as resources for further exploration.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of country in Melbourne, the *Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation* and in the inner west of Sydney, the *Gadigal and Wangai peoples of the Eora Nation*, (where the presenters taped the introductory video clips at the start of each module) and throughout Australia.

We acknowledge First Nations people throughout the world. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture.

We acknowledge the stories, traditions and living cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on this land and commit to building a brighter future together. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

MODULE 8

The Wider Mercy Family & Mercy Values

Watch the Introduction to Module 8 video clip [here](#). (Note that in previous versions, this module was Module 7).

Introduction to Module 8

In this module, we introduce the wider Mercy Family to which ISMAPNG and Mercy Ministry Companions belong, and briefly look at some ministries and international initiatives, focusing on the common mission that brings us all together. *You are part of this family through your involvement in a ministry with a 'mercy heritage'*. We also consider some of the values which are core to the expression of our mercy ministry.

You will need access to a copy of your organisation's mission, vision and values statements for one of the activities in this module.

Opening Reflection

There is a Wideness in God's Mercy

There is a wideness in God's Mercy,
like the wideness of the sea.
There is a kindness in God's justice,
which is more than liberty.
There is no place where earth's sorrows
are more felt than in heaven.
There is no place where earth's failings
have such kindly judgement given.

For the love of God is broader
than the measures of the mind.
At the heart of the Eternal
is most wonderfully kind.
If our love were but more faithful,
we would gladly trust God's Word,
and our lives reflect thanksgiving
for the goodness of our Lord

Taken from <https://prayer.knowing-jesus.com/Prayers-for-Mercy>

On the following page, you can read a brief summary of four key aspects of the wider Mercy family [Mercy International Association (MIA); Mercy Global Presence; the MIA Vision Statement and 'the One Mercy Mission' in which we are engaged and to which we each contribute in our local area].

You can explore more detailed information through the links provided.

MODULE 8

The Wider Mercy Family & Mercy Values

Mercy International Association

Mercy International Association (MIA) was formed in 1994. Its members are the Mercy Institutes, Congregations or Federations in the Americas, Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Great Britain, Ireland, Newfoundland, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines. The first house of Mercy, in Baggot Street, Dublin, is the location of Mercy International Centre, the focal point for many of the activities of MIA and a place of pilgrimage for many mercy women, men and young people inspired by the vision of Catherine McAuley. Further information about MIA can be found at

<https://www.mercyworld.org/>

Mercy Global Presence

MIA describes Mercy Global Presence as “*an organic entity and a countercultural sign in a globalized world which has made more extreme the displacement of persons and degradation of Earth.*” Mercy sisters from the member congregations, institutes and federations, their ministry partners and Associates are currently exploring this in greater depth through prayerful reflection, poems, artwork, grassroots ministry experiences and a systemic change lens. Further information can be found at

<https://www.mercyworld.org/about/our-initiatives/mercy-global-presence/>

MIA Vision Statement

The current MIA Vision statement was approved by the MIA Board and launched at the start of the 25th anniversary year of MIA, in early 2019. The concept of Mercy Global Presence is core to the renewed Vision, with an emphasis on the invitation to all members of the wider Mercy family to help bring this vision to life. On the MIA website you will find the Vision Statement in the 8 languages spoken across the Mercy world. Further details at

<https://www.mercyworld.org/about/vision-strategy/>

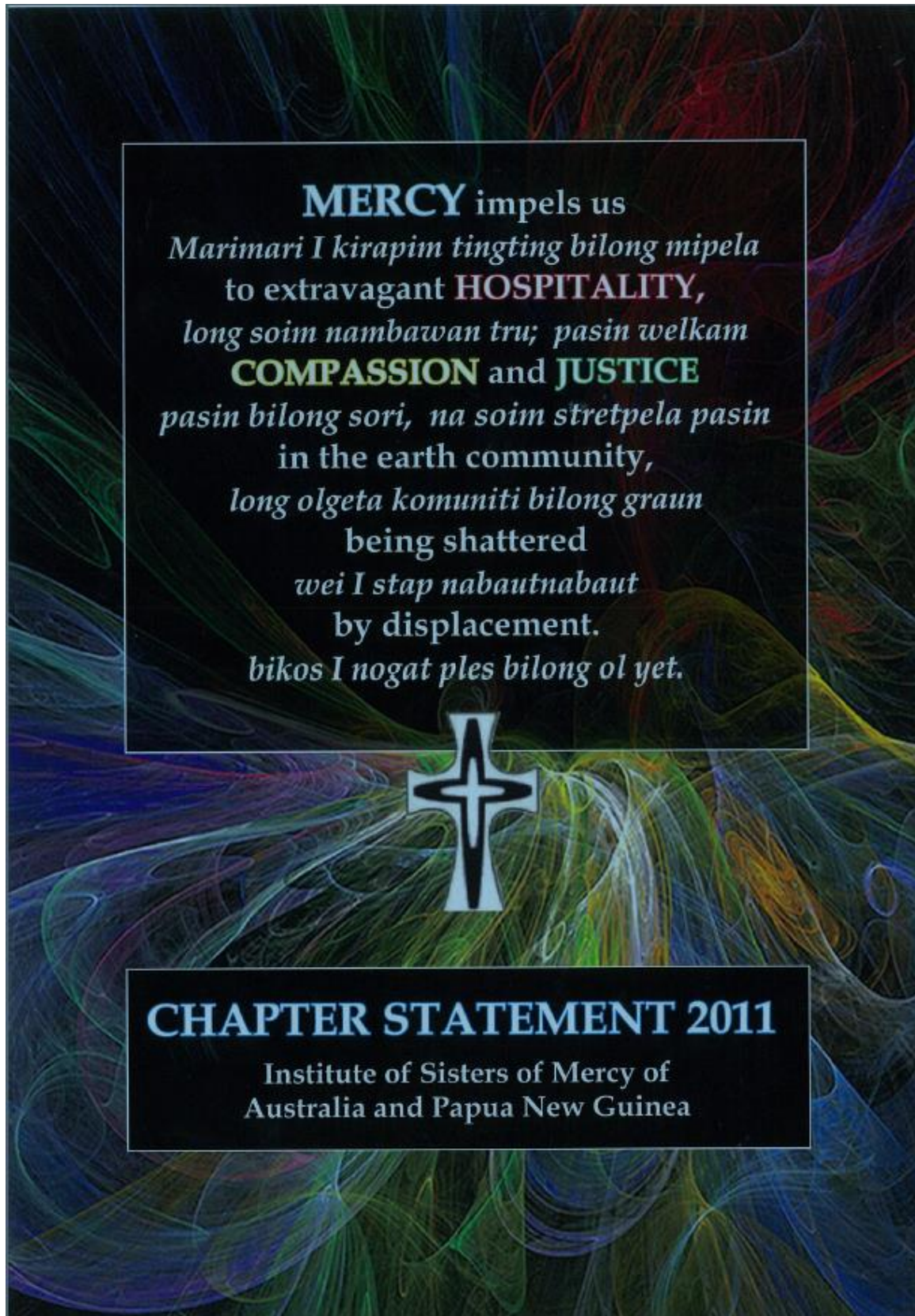
One Mercy Mission

In the inspirational section of the Constitutions of ISMAPNG, we are reminded of Catherine McAuley's teaching that ‘*Mercy is the principal path marked out by Jesus for those who desire to follow him.*’ (Original Rule, p. 304) There are many ways of responding mercifully to those in need, to heed the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth. Each ministry is called to meet a particular need, as expressed in its Mission, Vision or Values Statement. As the ISMAPNG Constitutions emphasize ‘*whatever and wherever our ministry is, however, we are part of the one mercy mission, part of the ongoing mission of the compassionate Jesus.*’ (Constitutions 4.03)


MODULE 8

The Wider Mercy Family & Mercy Values

Mercy Values



MERCY impels us
Marimari I kirapim tingting bilong mipela
to extravagant **HOSPITALITY**,
long soim nambawan tru; pasin welkam
COMPASSION and **JUSTICE**
pasin bilong sori, na soim stretpela pasin
in the earth community,
long olgeta komuniti bilong graun
being shattered
wei I stap nabautnabaut
by displacement.
bikos I nogat ples bilong ol yet.



CHAPTER STATEMENT 2011
Institute of Sisters of Mercy of
Australia and Papua New Guinea

MODULE 8

The Wider Mercy Family & Mercy Values

Take some time to read your organisation's Mission/Vision/Values statements.

What are the Mercy values named in your ministry's statements?

What connections, if any, do you notice between these values and those stated by Mercy International Association and ISMAPNG's stated aim or its Chapter Statements?

Concluding Reflection

Much has been explored in these eight Orientation modules. There will be other opportunities provided to enhance your understanding and appreciation of 'mercy' as it is lived out in the tradition of Catherine McAuley in a wide range of contexts.

More than ever, we are called to be people of hope, to welcome and encourage others and help them to find a sense of purpose. No matter their background, language, culture or faith tradition, for many people we encounter, **we are a face of mercy** for them.

As you reflect on the following words of Mary Sullivan rsm, give thanks for the opportunity you have, as a member of the Mercy family, to sow seeds of hope in the life of another, and then another and then another ...

CATHERINE'S EMBRACE OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY

'If we wish to sow the seeds of real hope in our world, I think Catherine McAuley would say: This is the way we must do it – one person at a time:
one answering of the figurative door,
one embrace of the stranger,
one welcoming of the other,
one sharing of our bread and milk –
one person at a time.'

(Sullivan, M. 1996, in *Morning and Evening Prayer of the Sisters of Mercy*, p. 931)

References & Acknowledgments

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