

At the recent Zoom session, Mary Pellegrino csj spoke about the different seasons of life. She said how young adulthood is often a time of exploration and discovery, midlife can be a time of responsibility and reorientation, and later life invites its own wisdom, reflection and purpose. In response, we invited women who represent different stages and transitions of Mercy life to share their reflections on the call to Mercy in this time and in this place.

Charlotte and Zoe, students at the Academy of Mary Immaculate, see Mercy as inspiring hope even in difficult times, helping us to believe that things can get better. They are living out their Mercy call, along with other Academy students, through practical projects organised by the Academy's justice group, collaboration with other Mercy schools in the sponsorship of a student in Tanzania and by volunteering at St Mary's House of Welcome. They also extend Mercy to how they support one another as part of the school community whether that be in the classroom or in after school activities.

When you are merciful towards someone else, you are also blessed. Mercy has a way of being reciprocated and carried forward, as one person receives it and then offers it to another. That, I think, is what makes it so beautiful.

Both students describe Mercy as a profound gift and can not imagine not being part of the Mercy community. They hope to continue *Living Mercy Purposefully* when they finish at the Academy through joining Young Mercy Links and by visiting Kenya and Tanzania.

Laura Maguire, Regional Community Coordinator for Rockhampton, said that over time she has come to understand Mercy not simply as helping people, but as something lived through quieter ways, through patience, presence, listening, dignity and compassion in everyday moments.

Initially, it was the role itself that attracted me. But once I began working here, I found myself inspired by the sisters themselves - by their kindness,

resilience and compassion, by the quiet way they care for others, and by the deep sense of community they embody.

Sister Regina McInerney said that Mercy is a lifelong vocation, that grows and changes shape as we do.

Years and years ago, I began to notice how often I came across the idea that a vocation grows. Different authors expressed it in different ways, but the message stayed with me: vocation is not fixed. It expands, deepens and takes different shapes over time. As life changes, so too does the way we live out our call.

Sister Carolyn Nolan reflected on the shift from a life defined by activity to one shaped more by being.

We were very focused in our earlier days on being busy and doing. I think we've come to a point over the years too... that we're more on about being who we are and being what we see ourselves to be.

In the witness of older Sisters, she sees their graciousness for their years and the way they live with the limits of aging and dependence. She calls this a grace we have when we're in their company.

Sister Carolyn concludes:

We don't have a monopoly as members of the Order, on Mercy. Instead, we also learn from those we work with.



Zoe, Mary Moloney rsm and Charlotte

Haven't we been Living Mercy Purposefully all our lives?

For most of us, the answer to this question is a resounding YES! Mercy is, however, not something that is static. As Catherine reminded us, *We can never say 'it is enough'*. Each day brings a new context, a new challenge and a new opportunity to live Mercy in a purposeful way.

As we mentioned last month, the world in which we are living Mercy continues to undergo dramatic change. We are not only living in an era of change, but in a change of era. Pope Leo has observed in *Magnifica Humanitas* that *each generation inherits the task of shaping its own era, of guiding history to become a place where the dignity of every person is safeguarded, justice is promoted and fraternity is made possible*.

We are living in a time of extraordinary flux, where global systems and structures are being dismantled, and where many of the assumptions we once held about how the world works are being challenged.

In her recent Zoom session, Mary Pellegrino csj took this reflection further, reminding us:

We are certainly living in a time that feels devoid of meaning. Finding ways to recapture meaning and purpose in our lives is a way of creating, and continuing to co-create, this future world with God. The ways we found meaning and purpose in the past

may no longer work; we now have to pursue them much more intentionally.

And it's a real invitation, I think, for anyone following the Gospel, but particularly for you who carry the charism of Mercy, to really reflect on the presence of your charism as an orienting compass, as it serves the world in trying to renew its meaning and purpose.

Many of us may also be experiencing our own change of era in our personal lives. The way we are living may have changed, or may be changing. Our health may be different. Our living circumstances may have shifted. Some of us may no longer be engaged in the ministries, roles or routines that once gave shape to our days. We may be navigating transitions in family life, community life, work, retirement, ageing, grief, or new beginnings we did not expect.

In times such as these, the call to live Mercy purposefully does not disappear; rather, it deepens. It asks us to notice where God is present now, in this season, and to trust that Mercy still has something to ask of us and something to offer through us.

Where might God be calling me in this season of my life?

Mercy is...

Between now and Saturday, August 1, you are invited to complete the phrase 'Mercy is...' in a written reflection (it might just be a couple of sentences or words), prayer, poem, photograph, craft, dance, song, artwork, video or other creative response. You may like to do this on your own or with others.

All contributions from across our Institute will then be combined into one Letter to Catherine McAuley that will be sent out in September.

Please send contributions to:

communication@ismapng.org.au

What's coming up 1 July - 31 July

This month you are invited to:

- ✓ View the video by [clicking here](#). It can also be watched on the ISMAPNG Youtube channel
- ✓ At the end of each day reflect on the three questions from **Our Daily Mercy Examen**
- ✓ Get together with others for a **Kitchen Table Conversation** in your local community or join us on Zoom on **Thursday, 9 July at 3.30pm AEST**
- ✓ Share your thoughts and reflections by emailing communication@ismapng.org.au