



A Time of Reflection and Celebration

The changing seasons, of both the Church and the natural world around us, remind us of the rhythms of each year and how quickly time passes. Ten days ago, on Friday 25 March, we were able to celebrate the deeply moving and uplifting Eucharistic Celebration of Thanksgiving for Mercy Ministry Companions at St Michael the Archangel Church, Stanmore. This event occurred just ten months after the Trustee Directors first gathered together with the Institute Leadership Team in Sydney to commence their formation for the role.

At that meeting, the Trustee Directors were given a clear mandate:

“Continue to be people grounded in the Gospel and charism of Mercy. This calls you to keep your eye and your ear on the pulse and the heart of each of the ministries and particularly on how the poorest, most disadvantaged person is benefitting or being disadvantaged by decisions that Board Directors and staff, governments or Church make through policies and services”.

Pope Francis charges us: *“The Church must be a place of mercy freely given, where everyone can feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live the good life of the Gospel”.* Evangelii Gaudium

These are the mandates of Mercy Ministry Companions!



As I said on the day, so many people, over many years, have contributed to the realisation of Mercy Ministry Companions.

On behalf of the Trustee Directors, I express our heartfelt gratitude to them all for their vision and labours. We especially thank the

Sisters of Mercy and in particular, the current Institute Leadership Team – Eveline, Caroline, Gaye, Liz and Maureen, for making the day so memorable.

Finally, as we approach the Easter event that is the foundation stone of our faith, I pray that it might be a wellspring for each of you in yourselves, your homes and your ministries – invigorating our hopes and dreams with the Christian promise of new beginnings.

Margaret Bounader (Chair)

Meeting of Trustee Directors at Academy of Mary Immaculate

One of the key priorities of the Trustee Directors meeting program for 2022 has been the opportunities to be physically present amongst our Ministries and their staff. With this in mind we were extremely grateful to Principal Sr Mary Moloney RSM and the staff and students of the Academy of Mary Immaculate (Fitzroy, VIC) for their warm welcome on 28 February 2022.

The Academy is one of two schools founded by Mother Ursula Frayne, the first Sister of Mercy to arrive in Australia. Mother Ursula was also involved in the operations of the orphanage at South Melbourne, now the national headquarters for MacKillop Family Services. So, it was a wonderful opportunity to gather, reflect and pray in the College Chapel where Mother Ursula is buried.



The prayer service in the Chapel was deeply moving and provided a wonderful start to the journey for the Trustee Directors. We thank the Choir for their beautiful musical contribution.

The Trustee Directors also met with a number of students from the SRC and were pleased to hear of their involvement with McAuley. This was a great example of cross ministry work.

The meeting itself provided the opportunity for the Chair of Mercy Education Limited, Sr Sylvia Williams, Director Georgina Smith and CEO Christopher Houlihan to talk about the strategic direction of Mercy Education and to share thoughts on challenges and opportunities ahead. The meeting was followed by dinner with several of the Melbourne-based directors of Mercy Education.



Easter Reflection



*Image: Stained glass window in Chester Cathedral
Words: John Michael Talbot
<https://johnmichaeltalbot.com/holy-week-easter>*

Jesus's resurrection which we celebrate at Easter displays once and for all the victory of simplicity over unnecessary religious and secular complications, gospel poverty over the consumerism that consumes, and listening obedience over self-absorbed individualism that constantly talks without ever really communicating. He shows us the way of unity and communion over division, humility over pride, and service over lordship.

In the world our problems seem simply "impossible" to overcome. But the Easter victory of Jesus displays that they are not! Nothing Is Impossible With God!

The image of the cross and our reflection on the death and resurrection of Jesus shows us that love can overcome hatred, forgiveness can overcome our tendency to judgment, and justice can overcome the tendency for vengeance in the name of justice.

Gentleness can overcome cruelty, and humility can overcome pride. Sacred silence can overcome the noise of the world, and sacred stillness can overcome the world's agitations.

How? By letting go of the old self through the cross so that we might be raised up a new creation in Christ. It happens in meditation one thought at a time, one breath at a time, and in life one challenge at a time. It is simple and easy, but the journey takes our entire life. But it can be done through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Mercy Community Services Australia Site Visit

Margaret, Anthony and Helen were guests of the Mercy Community Services Australia Board in March and viewed the services and programs on offer at McAuley House Footscray.



For many women, their journey can only start when they have had a chance to rest and recover.

A significant number of women supported have had long histories of trauma, sexual assault, childhood trauma, family violence, mental illness and other complex health needs.

McAuley House Footscray was purpose built in 2016, designed with input from women and is one of a kind in Victoria.

We also visited a new development involving the conversion of a decommissioned aged-care facility into an innovative housing facility for at-risk women and children.



Such accommodation is for women and children who need to immediately escape family violence. The women needing support have experienced, or are at immediate risk of, serious harm: through physical and emotional violence, threats, sexual assault, and stalking.

The visit concluded with a shared lunch and the chance to discuss the work we had seen, and the ongoing challenges.

New McAuley logo and branding



The new branding symbolises a contemporary, energetic organisation that takes great strides every day in delivering the best outcomes for the women and children that they have the great honour of walking alongside on their journey to achieve their highest potential.

This new logo tells a part of the story with the bounce representing the renewed enthusiasm for life that they wish for their clients and the colour gradient representing new horizons and brighter days ahead.

Eucharistic Thanksgiving Celebration for Mercy Ministry Companions

Thanks to the hard work of so many people, a deeply moving liturgy celebrated by the Most Reverend Terrence Brady DD VG EV, Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of Sydney, was followed by an afternoon tea at Stanmore.

With string music in the background, the rain held off for most of the afternoon and the beautiful garden provided a lovely backdrop to a memorable day. A video of the entire event is available online at this [link](#).



An overhead view from the choir loft at St Michael the Archangel Church in Stanmore, Sydney.



Presentation and blessing of the Trustee Directors



Leaving Procession



Gathering of Trustee Directors and Institute Leadership Team outside – with the gifts presented at the thanksgiving: A copy of the framed statutes of MMC and a liturgical candle.

The celebratory gathering afterwards for which the rain held off just long enough!



Trustee Director Meetings

The Trustee Directors held their February and March meetings at Academy of Mary Immaculate Fitzroy and the Institute's Lewisham offices respectively.

Some of the key outcomes of the meeting included:

- Reflecting on Synodality and Good Governance with a presentation on Building Good Judgement by Dr Elissa Roper
- Finalising our contribution to the Synod on synodality
- Exploring the formation requirements of the Trustee Directors and updating the Trustee Directors with the progress of Sr Annette Schneider in engaging with the Ministries and their Chairs about their formation needs
- Receiving a detailed briefing strategic direction of Mercy Education
- A tour of the Mary Glowery Museum at ACU
- First 'in person' meeting with the Sponsor Representative Group
- Meeting with Councillors from Mercy Partners, a fellow PJP
- Considering various Ministry Board minutes and reports
- Considering options with respect to the Mercy Leadership Program and Dublin pilgrimage
- Considering current safeguarding issues, including some Trustee Directors and MMC staff participating in the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Introductory Session for Leaders held by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd on 29 and 30 March. The remaining Trustee Directors and staff will complete this training later in the year.
- Reviewing our government compliance activity

Three committees established by the Trustee Directors have also been busy in their content areas. The committees are:

- Formation Committee;
- Board Evaluation, Nomination and Remuneration Committee and
- Finance Committee.

These committees have set their meeting schedules for the year and are beginning to engage with the ministries in their subject areas.

Save The Date...

Ministries Gathering

THU 27 OCT 2022 Melbourne

FRI 28 OCT 2022 Further details to follow but CEOs and Board Chairs are asked to put these dates aside

Contact Details – General Communications

ministries@mercyministrycompanions.org.au

Use this email account for all communications from ministries to MMC, including:

- Newsletters
- Invitations
- Questions
- Decision Requests

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Use this email for all requests for support with all MPL property matters, including:

- Planning permit requests
- Building permit requests
- Heritage enquiries
- Disputes with neighbours or councils

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Mercy Ministry Companions

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Trustee Director Meetings 2022

Month	Meeting (Day 1 of 2)	Papers Due	Location
FEB	MON 28 FEB	MON 14 FEB	Mercy Education, Fitzroy VIC
MAR	THU 24 MAR	THU 10 MAR	Sydney NSW
APR	THU 28 APR	THU 14 APR	Mercy Connect, Albury NSW
MAY	MON 30 MAY	MON 16 MAY	Mercy Health, Heidelberg VIC
JUN	MON 27 JUN	MON 13 JUN	Mercy Services, Newcastle NSW
JUL	MON 25 JUL	MON 11 JUL	Mercy Health, Montrose VIC
AUG	MON 29 AUG	MON 15 AUG	Mercy Education, Perth WA
SEP	MON 26 SEP	MON 12 SEP	McAuley, Footscray VIC
OCT	THU 27 OCT	FRI 28 OCT	Ministries Gathering, Melbourne
NOV	MON 07 NOV	MON 24 OCT	Mackillop Family Services, Blacktown NSW
DEC	MON 12 DEC	MON 28 NOV	Melbourne VIC