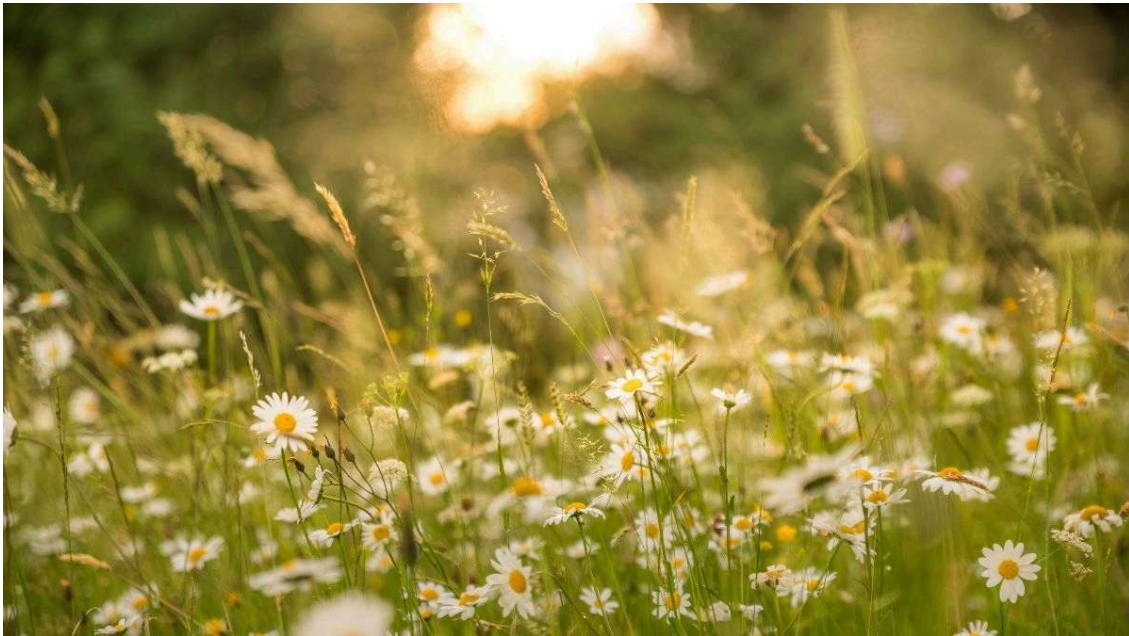




March 2026



March Reflection: What did you say?

Carmel Ross, MMC Trustee Director

In her reflection article last month, Sr Annette mentioned the commencement of Lent. Within another week or two, we will focus on the crucifixion of Jesus followed three days later by his glorious resurrection.

Among our points of focus during Lent is self-reflection. We are invited to ponder how our lives are going, how our relationships with God and each other are going. This year, Pope Leo's message for Lent is about relationships – in particular, how we speak about each other. He put it simply: *I would like to invite you to a very practical and frequently unappreciated form of abstinence: that of refraining from words that offend and hurt our neighbour. ... Let us begin by disarming our language, avoiding harsh words and rash judgement, refraining from slander and speaking ill of those who are not present and cannot defend themselves.*¹

One of the tragedies of our world is the ease with which hurtful, harmful, untrue words about others can be broadcast to millions in a second via social media.

[Continue reading](#)

Memo for Easter

Holy Thursday: wash the feet of an Iraqi mother;
Good Friday: bring a flower to the cross for her dying child;
Holy Saturday: the day of waiting;
Light a candle from the great primeval lifefire of Easter
Immersed in the flowing waters of creation.
Light it for a humanity whose inventiveness is so often
destructive,
Whose intentions are so often terrible
Whose actions are so often horrifying.
Sunday, early, in a garden,
Watch and listen for signs of love ...
For signs of love.
Monday: same as Sunday.

[Mary Wickham rsm (2006) Souvenirs of Spirit Spectrum Publications: Richmond VIC, p. 29, used with permission]



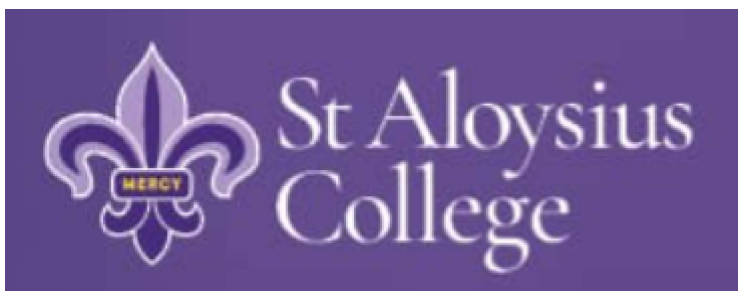
From the Formation Coordinator

Middle Leaders Program 2026

Two groups of Middle Leaders have commenced their four-part Program with a two-day residential; Group 1 at Santa Casa, Queenscliff, from February 18-20, and Group 2 at Mary MacKillop Place, North Sydney, from March 16-18. We have 30 participants in the 2026 Program, the details of which can be found in the brochure on MMC's website [Middle Leader web brochure](#). In Group 2, we were very pleased to welcome a participant from Whanau Mercy Ministries in Aotearoa New Zealand, and two from ISMAPNG.

To consolidate their learning, each participant does a mini-project, focusing on something relevant to their role. In the coming months we are pleased to include an item from some of the 2025 participants, beginning with **Julie Stephenson** from St Aloysius College in Adelaide. Thank you Julie for sharing the details of your project.

From previous Middle Leaders participants



My Journey, My Voice

Julie Stephenson, Careers and VET Coordinator at St Aloysius College, Adelaide

My mini project, *My Journey, My Voice*, reflects many of the key learnings from the Middle Leaders Program facilitated by Mercy Ministry Companions. Throughout the program, participants were encouraged to consider how leadership within Mercy ministries is grounded in compassion, justice, and a commitment to the dignity of every person. This project allowed me to translate those values into a practical initiative within the school community.

One of the most significant insights from the program, was the importance of listening intently to the experiences of those who may feel unheard or marginalised. Inspired by the Mercy tradition of Catherine McAuley and the work of the Sisters of Mercy, my project sought to create a space where refugee students, whose futures continue to be impacted by restrictions of bridging visas, could share their stories in their own voices.

[Continue reading](#)

Mercy Ministry Companions



Historic first face-to-face meeting of the Mercy Alliance Australia / New Zealand

Representatives from the four Mercy Ministerial Public Juridic Persons in Australia and New Zealand held their first-ever in-person meeting in February in Melbourne. Joining their Mercy Ministry Companions hosts, were two Trustees/Stewards from each of Mercy Care, Mercy Partners and Whānau Mercy Ministries.

[Continue reading](#)

Catholic Archdiocese Melbourne newsletter

Every part of the Church is encouraged to take an active role in their local synod or plenary council processes. The Catholic Archdiocese Melbourne continues to support this engagement by providing regular updates on the Melbourne Synod through their newsletter available on their website. We encourage you to subscribe and stay connected with the ongoing work of Synodality across our communities.

[Subscribe to the CAM newsletter](#)

Mercy Education



AMSSA Agreement Strengthens Shared Commitment

The Australasian Mercy Secondary Schools Association (AMSSA) has reached an important milestone, with the formal approval of its new Constitution by the three Australasian Public Juridic Persons with education ministries: Mercy Ministry Companions, Mercy Partners, and Whanau Mercy Ministries.

Signed on 16 February 2026, the agreement affirms a shared commitment to collaboration while clearly respecting the canonical, civil, and governance responsibilities of each PJP. It provides a strong and transparent foundation for AMSSA as a missional and professional network, supporting Mercy-heritage secondary schools across Australasia through shared formation, connection, and collective voice.

Mercy Ministry Companions, Mercy Partners, and Whanau Mercy Ministries acknowledge with appreciation the collaborative leadership of Phil Morison, AMSSA President, and Stephen Walsh, AMSSA Executive Officer, and look forward to continued engagement.



Celebrations at Sacred Heart College, Geelong

Gabrielle McMullen AM, MMC Trustee Director

On 17 February the community of Sacred Heart College in Newton, Geelong, gathered for the 2026 Maguire Celebration, which brings together current students and staff, families, alumni and friends of the College. Several Sisters of Mercy were present, and Gabrielle McMullen AM represented the Trustee Directors of Mercy Ministry Companions. Following pre-event refreshments, the Celebration commenced with award presentations interspersed with performances by the College choir, orchestra

and alumni. The evening closed with the formal launch of the academic year and announcement of the 2026 College theme, **Lead the change. Be the difference.**

[Continue reading](#)



150 Years of the Sisters of Mercy in Bendigo

Gabrielle McMullen AM, MMC Trustee Director

On 12 February, the Catherine McAuley College community gathered for the College's beginning-of-year Mass in Sacred Heart Cathedral, Bendigo. This special occasion was also the first event in a year of celebrations marking 150 years since the Sisters of Mercy arrived in Bendigo and began their education ministry there. Sisters of Mercy attending included Mercy Ministry Companions (MMC) Formation Coordinator, Dr Annette Schneider RSM. The MMC Trustee Directors were represented by Tony Goad and Gabrielle McMullen AM.

[Continue reading](#)



Topping Out Ceremony – St Aloysius College, North Melbourne

Daniela Paradiso, MMC Ministry Property Consultant

On 17 February, I had the pleasure of joining St Aloysius College for the Topping Out Ceremony of their new six-storey building, currently under construction at the Boundary Road campus.

A Topping Out Ceremony marks a major milestone in any building project. It signifies that the structure has reached its full height and that the primary structural works are now complete. It is also a moment that celebrates the collective pride of everyone involved – when the design moves from vision to reality.

[Continue reading](#)



Sacred Heart College Geelong opens Sports and Wellness Precinct

On the 18 March, Daniela Paradiso MMC's Ministry Property Consultant, had the privilege of attending the blessing and official opening of the Sports and Wellness Precinct at Sacred Heart College Geelong. It was a beautiful and reverent ceremony that thoughtfully acknowledged both the present and the rich history of the College.

Mercy Community Services



Mercy Connect Celebrates International Women's Day

Earlier this month, Mercy Connect recognised and celebrated International Women's Day, by paying homage to the incredible women who came before us, creating a place of belonging through courage, compassion and commitment. One of these women, Catherine McAuley, recognised a need to support women and children in the community and felt compelled to act. Her story remains just as relevant today as it did nearly 200 years ago. Some might say that we are facing another pivotal moment in history... where the call for social justice, compassion and respect for human life is heightened by the troubling behaviours we are experiencing at a global level by people of privilege.

"Balancing the Scales" is the UN Women Australia's theme for International Women's Day, which focuses on achieving justice, fairness and safety for all women and girls. When we think about the work we do – the contributions made by each of us in what Catherine McAuley refers to as the "perfect discharge of our ordinary duties", we are doing just that – we are doing what we can to balance the scales, recognising that not everyone is starting from the same place. Some recent examples of this at Mercy Connect include:

- Our 2025 Workplace Gender Equality Report indicates that our total remuneration gender pay gap is smaller compared to others in our sector of the same size.
- 75 per cent of those attending this year's Mercy Ministry Companions Middle Leaders Program are women.
- Of those receiving tenure awards this year – 77 per cent are women, ranging from five to 25 years of service.
- Our commitment to providing educational opportunities for all. At our graduation ceremony for Certificate IV in Leadership and Management, nine women were recognised for their commitment to further study.



Join McAuley's annual fundraising lunch 2026

The McAuley Safe lunch 2026 supports McAuley's work on Safe at Home – a response designed to intervene earlier in family violence situations to support the victim survivor to remain safely in the home thereby, reducing the likelihood of their becoming homeless.

This year the event will highlight progress from the first year of the Safe at Home trial, reflecting on the learnings and achievements so far. You can look forward to hearing from special guest, Pauline Spencer, Regional Coordinating Magistrate at Wyndham Law Courts, who will share her experience of the court's role in family violence safety and accountability.

[Book tickets](#)



MacKillop Family Services program to support multicultural youth

On 23 March, MacKillop Family Services launched a suite of resources, developed in collaboration with the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY), to enhance the cultural responsiveness of youth residential care programs across Victoria.

The resources were developed during a pilot program that was established after staff identified that young people achieved better outcomes when cultural identity, communication, and lived experience were meaningfully embedded into everyday care. The program drew on cultural expertise within MacKillop's diverse workforce, matching Multicultural Advisors with young people and care teams based on shared cultural background or lived experience. Advisors supported care planning, strengthened family engagement, and built the confidence of care teams to deliver culturally safe, inclusive care.

During the pilot – which was funded by the Scanlon Foundation, the Brian M Davis Charitable Foundation, and Equity Trustees – MacKillop supported 42 young people with 64 cultural consultations, delivered by 19 Cultural Mentors working alongside 111 care team members across residential care homes.

[Continue reading](#)



Mercy Health

Care first

Mercy Health recognised as an Employer of Choice for Gender Equality

Mercy Health has released its Employer Statement as a member of Workplace Gender Equality Australia. Deeply committed to advancing gender equality and fostering a workplace culture where all employees are valued, respected and given equal opportunities to succeed, gender equality is an integral value at Mercy Health. Over the last year, Mercy Health has delivered a number of key outcomes to support gender equality across the organisation and will continue to deliver the commitments in its Gender Equity Plan 2023-2026.

[Find out more about gender equality at Mercy Health](#)



Mercy Health celebrates milestone birthdays

Mercy Health staff at Mercy Place Shepparton, Mercy Place Bethlehem and Mercy Place Ballarat have been busy celebrating the 100th birthdays of three of their residents – Dorothy Blackmore, Joyce McGoldrick and Kath Moloney. All three celebrations were featured in local media, as residents celebrated this incredible milestone birthday with staff, family and friends.

[Continue reading](#)



Mercy Health celebrates International Women's Day

Mercy Health staff celebrated International Women's Day in early March at sites across the country, announcing 19 new inductees to the Mercy Health Honour Roll of Women.

Nominated by their colleagues and teams, the women recognised in the Honour Roll are dedicated to their roles, encourage advancement, contribute to gender equality in their community and continue to live Mercy Health's values.

Mercy Health is proud to recognise these inspirational leaders and changemakers and pledges its ongoing commitment to gender equality.



Mercy Health – connecting with communities

Mercy Health reflects on three unique stories each highlighting how Catholic health and aged care organisations connects with their communities.

- **A New Year Begins with Victoria's First Baby:** Mercy Health Heidelberg's Mercy Hospital for Women welcomed Victoria's first baby of 2026.

- **Compassion in Action on World Day of the Sick:** Mercy Health observed World Day of the Sick with a story on the dedicated service provided by palliative care volunteers.
- **Nurturing Creativity and Connection in Later Life:** A Mercy Place Warrnambool resident performs with the Find Your Voice Warrnambool choir, in a performance with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra at Melbourne's Sidney Myer Music Bowl.

[Continue reading](#)

Conferences and Events



MacKillop Family Services - Lead the Way Conference 2026

Date: 2-3 September 2026

Location: Melbourne, VIC (The Rydges Hotel, Exhibition St) and Online

Join 1,000+ professionals from education, community services and government for the Lead the Way Conference 2026, focused on building safer, healthier and more resilient communities, schools and sectors.

This hybrid event will feature inspiring keynote and guest speakers (with more to come), practical case studies and evidence-informed workshops.

This is a great opportunity to connect with peers, exchange ideas, and strengthen your professional network.

[Find out more and register now](#)

Please share this Mercy Ministry Companions Newsletter with your colleagues and [opt-in for further communications.](#)

In the spirit of reconciliation, Mercy Ministry Companions acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of the country where we live and work today.

Copyright © 2025 Mercy Ministry Companions, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.