



# AMSSA

Australasian Mercy Secondary Schools Association

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## NEWSLETTER 03/06 AUGUST 2006

Welcome to the MSEA Newsletter.

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1. President's Report
2. A Prayer – the works of mercy
3. Useful things from the Dublin conference
4. Are your staff, students and parents ready for Mercy Day?  
Check out these ideas and resources.

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This newsletter has a report from the Mercy International Conference in Dublin with plenty of practical suggestions for you whether you were at the conference or not.

We have had a very positive response to our **August 25 and 26 Pastoral Care Conference, *Caring for Students – the Mercy Way***. The conference promises to be a great forum for our staff in pastoral positions and it is not too late to register. Email Kitty Guerin for details: [kguerin@olmc.nsw.edu.au](mailto:kguerin@olmc.nsw.edu.au)

Our **Biennial MSEA Conference will be in Brisbane on August 16 – 18, 2007**. Please pencil these dates into your diary, and more information will be forthcoming soon.

**Lee-Anne Perry (President)** [perryl@allhallows.qld.edu.au](mailto:perryl@allhallows.qld.edu.au)

## **Prayer - The works of mercy**

(Adapted from Morning and Evening Prayer of the Sisters of Mercy)

Jesus Christ, you testified on all occasions a tender love of the poor, and declared that you would consider as done to you whatever we do for them. Help us to serve the poor with words and deeds of compassion:

*\* Give us compassionate hearts and willing hands.*

You call us to share our bread with the hungry and to question to reasons for hunger:

*\* Give us compassionate hearts and willing hands.*

You call us to shelter the homeless and to remedy the causes of homelessness:

*\* Give us compassionate hearts and willing hands.*

You call us to clothe the naked and to challenge the inequities among the members of the human family:

*\* Give us compassionate hearts and willing hands.*

You call us to visit the imprisoned and to speak out against injustices that imprison humankind:

*\* Give us compassionate hearts and willing hands.*

You call us to visit the sick and dying and to advocate health care for all people:

*\* Give us compassionate hearts and willing hands.*

Jesus, we pray for an increase in understanding of the needs of our sisters and brothers and for the courage to confront the social conditions that contribute to their suffering. May our faith be practical, measured by our deeds as well as by our words. We ask this with confidence in your unending love for your people. Amen.

## **MERCY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE DUBLIN, JULY 2006**

Over thirty MSEA members from New Zealand and Australia were in Dublin for the Mercy Secondary Education International Forum sponsored by the MSEA of the Americas. Among the 137 delegates were Mercy educators from North, Central and South America, Ireland, Africa, the UK and the Philippines. Our American MSEA counterparts had done a fantastic job planning and conducting the conference, a feature of which was a visit to 64A Baggot Street, now the Mercy International Centre, and Catherine McAuley's first House of Mercy. Visit the [www.mercyworld.org](http://www.mercyworld.org) site for a report of the conference and some great photos!

A highlight of the conference was a pilgrimage to Baggot Street, where we were able to stand in Catherine's schoolroom (the largest, most airy room in the house), the room where she died, the chapel, and to pray quietly at her grave in the garden.

**CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS** will be available online at [www.netmercyed.org](http://www.netmercyed.org) by Mercy Day (24 September) but you can secure advance copies from Mary Lee McCoy at [maryleemccoy@ahsrockets.org](mailto:maryleemccoy@ahsrockets.org).

**MUSIC FOR THE CONFERENCE** was composed by **Ray Paxton** (Mercy College Chatswood) and "As We Gather", "The Road to Mercy" and "Send us Your Spirit" featured in our liturgies. For details, contact him on [rpaxton@mercychatswood.ddb.catholic.edu.au](mailto:rpaxton@mercychatswood.ddb.catholic.edu.au). Ray also gave a presentation on how a school might go about identifying and fostering its mercy identity and values. Visit the website <http://www.mercychatswood.nsw.edu.au> and look under About us for the college strategic plan 2006 - 2009.

### **SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS – THEME 1: COLLABORATION**

**Breege O'Neill rsm** welcomed us to Catherine McAuley's neighbourhood: our conference centre is not far from her childhood home and from Coolock House, home of the Callaghans where she lived for some 20 years and where she had her first school for children and their mothers. For collaboration, Breege gave us the gaelic *meitheal*, and a rich image of the village harvesting, with everyone pitching in together to get everyone's crop in, in a spirit of shared labour, laughter and good humour. What a rich biblical image this is too.

**Helen Marie Burns rsm** looked at collaboration through lenses of quantum theory, the ministry of secondary education and the challenges inherent in collaboration. She took from the work of the Irish poet Seamus Heaney metaphors of the swing and the earthworm, and asked us: "What will be our trace upon the world as Mercy educators? Are we reinforcing existing situations (racism, fundamentalism, globalization) or are we working to bring justice? Can we make better use of our international contacts to link up the works of mercy around the globe?" For the full text, wait till Mercy Day and go to [www.netmercyed.org](http://www.netmercyed.org), or email [maryleemccoy@ahsrockets.org](mailto:maryleemccoy@ahsrockets.org) for advance copies.

### **SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS – THEME 2: SPIRITUALITY FOR MERCY EDUCATORS**

**Mary Reynolds rsm and Maria McGuinness rsm.** Using the image of a tree, Mary presented a foundational, root system of a spirituality for mercy educators and asked us to examine our work in light of these. Maria continued this image of the tree to help us identify where mercy is

in our schools – both what is blossoming and what is in need of careful tendering in order to bring it to life and into bloom as a mercy value. She based her presentation on a survey of students, staff and parents a concluded with a schema for ensuring that our core values are central to our effort rather than remaining, assumed but not named, on the periphery of our organizational structures and strategic plans. If you would like a full paper copy of these presentations, contact Frances on [principal@catholichighschool.nsw.edu.au](mailto:principal@catholichighschool.nsw.edu.au) and I can snail mail one to you. Otherwise wait for them to be on [www.netmercyed.org](http://www.netmercyed.org) or email [maryleemccoy@ahsrockets.org](mailto:maryleemccoy@ahsrockets.org) for advance copies.

**Janette Gray rsm** described a mercy spirituality as a response to immediate need coupled with the imagination that enables the response to be sustained. She drew of the parable of the lost coin to give us the tenets of a spirituality for mercy educators and challenged us about what might be the indicators for this spirituality as it grows and develops. For the full text, wait till Mercy Day and go to [www.netmercyed.org](http://www.netmercyed.org) , or email [maryleemccoy@ahsrockets.org](mailto:maryleemccoy@ahsrockets.org) for advance copies.

### **SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS – THEME 3: WORLD VISION AND RESPONSIBILITY**

**Adele Howard rsm** stressed the need to give advocacy skills and skills in critical analysis to those we educate. The Mercy and Justice Shall Meet cd-rom provides a tool for considered, just action following critical analysis and reflection on scripture and/or our mercy tradition. Adele asked if mercy educators worldwide can put the new technologies available to us at the service of finding new ways to belong together and to together make a difference to the terrible global predicament of poverty. And a difference can be made, as collaborative efforts have already effected better conditions for millions of people. For the full text, wait till Mercy Day and go to [www.netmercyed.org](http://www.netmercyed.org) , or email [maryleemccoy@ahsrockets.org](mailto:maryleemccoy@ahsrockets.org) for advance copies.

**Jim McGarry** presented us with the challenge of educating about the environment. He asked:

- Are we paying a living wage to all we employ?
- Do we buy and use fair trade coffee/tea/chocolate in our staffrooms?
- Where do we buy school uniforms?
- What are we recycling?
- How are we conserving energy?

Jim's publication "The Environmentally Responsible School" is recommended – email him on [jmcgarry@mercyhs.org](mailto:jmcgarry@mercyhs.org) for details. For the full text of his presentation, wait till Mercy Day and go to

[www.netmercyed.org](http://www.netmercyed.org) , or email [maryleemccoy@ahsrockets.org](mailto:maryleemccoy@ahsrockets.org) for advance copies.

**Sheila O’Gorman rsm** outlined the work of the Mercy International Justice Network. Visit the [www.mercyworld.org](http://www.mercyworld.org) site and look under Projects for more details of MIJN and who is your local MIJN contact person. (For the Asia Pacific region she is Helen Owens, at [somjust@chariot.net.au](mailto:somjust@chariot.net.au)).

MIJN have also developed materials for students on the Mercy and Justice Shall Meet cd-rom and these can be found on the [www.mercyworld.org](http://www.mercyworld.org) website; look under the Mercy and Justice Shall Meet logo. Email Frances on [principal@catholichighschool.nsw.edu.au](mailto:principal@catholichighschool.nsw.edu.au) for copies of the worksheets prepared by the New Zealand Sisters of Mercy and which were advertised in the May edition of the MSEA newsletter.

**Dotty McCrea** gave insight into the USA schools where the issues facing mercy educators are: the reality of lay leadership and how to maintain mercy identity: how to manage the financial issues and support schools especially in the deprived urban areas; and how to find potential leaders from the diverse cultures which make up the US of A. For the full text, wait till Mercy Day and go to [www.netmercyed.org](http://www.netmercyed.org) , or email [maryleemccoy@ahsrockets.org](mailto:maryleemccoy@ahsrockets.org) .

**Maureen McGuirk rsm** asked us: do we as mercy educators have true authority and creativity, are we centred on our mission and reflective about it, and do we love to serve and serve joyfully? For the full text, wait till Mercy Day and go to [www.netmercyed.org](http://www.netmercyed.org) , or email [maryleemccoy@ahsrockets.org](mailto:maryleemccoy@ahsrockets.org) for advance copies.

**Ethel Bignell rsm and Caitlin Conneely rsm**, from Mercy International Centre, told us about the present works of the Mercy International Association across the globe, in response to the millennium development goals, a new expression of the works of mercy. A glance at the world maps of mercy presence and extreme poverty shows that we are not present in some of the poorest areas. How can we redress this?

### **WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW? - A CHECKLIST OF SUGGESTIONS**

1. Send this newsletter to another person who will make good use of the material.
2. Are teachers in your school teaching students critical social analysis so that they might become advocates for mercy and justice on the world

stage? (The cd-rom offers teachers this tool and there are teaching support materials available – see above).

3. How can we use the [www.mercyworld.org](http://www.mercyworld.org) site to increase connections among mercy educators and begin conversations across the globe? Some suggestions follow.

- The mercyworld site, [www.mercyworld.org](http://www.mercyworld.org), is interactive: put your school onto the list of mercy schools.
- Get in touch with, and set up communications with, your Mercy International Justice Network contact person. (For the Asia pacific region she is Helen Owens, at [somjust@chariot.net.au](mailto:somjust@chariot.net.au))
- Mercy E-news has excellent links to mercy around the globe. Is E-news available to all your staff? Subscribe by either emailing [mercynews@fraynework.com.au](mailto:mercynews@fraynework.com.au) or by going to [www.mercyworld.org/news/enews.asp](http://www.mercyworld.org/news/enews.asp). Find a way to ensure that all your staff see E-news.
- Does your school make contributions to E-news? Make use of this network! Watch the E-news bulletins for the invitation to your students to send a Mercy Day greeting around the world.

4. What are you doing to teach your school community about what it means to live intimately with the universe?

5. Do all your staff know about the millennium development goals? You'll find them listed in the Mercy and Justice Shall Meet cd-rom, on the *Action* page of each story.

6. In the lead-up to World Youth Day in Sydney in 2008, how might your school make plans to sponsor a student from a mercy school in a poorer country to come to Sydney and share with your students in the celebration?

**Are your staff, students and parents ready for Mercy Day next term? Make it a mercy and justice initiative.**

1. Check out the July 31 edition of Mercy E-News for how your school can participate in the Mercy International justice Network's "Light a Candle for Peace in the World" on the 24<sup>th</sup> of each month (how appropriate for September 24!)

2. Order your copy of "Mercy and Justice shall meet" from Fraynetwork Multimedia, 55 Barry Street Carlton, Victoria, 3053 Australia  
Phone :: +61 3 9349 4696; Fax :: +61 9349 1604;  
email [majsm@mercyworld.org](mailto:majsm@mercyworld.org).

On the home page there is a link: Mercy Sisters, which takes you to Catherine McAuley, the Sisters today, mercy projects, a map of mercy ... and more.

3. Order copies of the print resource for "Mercy and Justice shall meet":  
go to <http://www.mercyworld.org/resources/viewesource.asp?id=228>.

4. Check our MSEA website [\*\*http://www.msea.mercy.org.au\*\*](http://www.msea.mercy.org.au)  
for a guide to websites about Catherine McAuley and the Mercy Sisters.  
PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS 12 MONTHS OLD- some websites have been updated!

5. The March 2006 MSEA newsletter had info on these books and how to get them:

Beyond Catherine, Stories of Mercy Foundresses, by the Mercy Archivists  
– has stories of the first Sisters in the Americas, New Zealand, Australia, Britain, Ireland, Newfoundland and the Philippines.

A Reflection of Mercy, Prayer services, liturgies and resources for Mercy Schools and Communities, by Sandy Flaherty

6. How about this resource for staff, board members, parents: "The life and Legacy of Catherine McAuley", published by the Melbourne Sisters, with text by Mary C Sullivan. Visit  
<http://www.mercyworld.org/resources/viewresource.asp?id=227>.