



AMSSA

Australasian Mercy Secondary Schools Association

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NEWSLETTER 01/06 MARCH 2006

Welcome to the first MSEA Newsletter for 2006.

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1. President's Report
2. A Prayer for Lent
3. Staff Spiritual Development
4. Send us your ideas for staff spiritual development
5. Some resources – do you have these yet?
6. Request from Christopher Clott, St Xavier University, Chicago

THE NEXT NEWSLETTER, IN SECOND TERM 2006, WILL HAVE AS ITS FOCUS THE CD ROM MERCY AND JUSTICE SHALL MEET.

Contributions are welcome from schools - how are you making use of this resource?

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The theme for this newsletter is the **spiritual development of staff**. We have offered you some ideas, and trust that you will find them thought provoking and stimulate your own approach with your staff. We are also asking you to **send us in an outline of your own ideas**, which we can collate and recycle to the other member schools.

Our new Western Australian MSEA executive member, **Loretta Wholley**, who replaces Rowena Lambert, joined us for our first phone meeting last week. We are grateful to Rowena for her input into the Association, and for her contributions to the initial issues of the newsletter.

You will receive the registration form for the **August 25 and 26 Pastoral Care Conference, *Caring for Students – the Mercy Way***, early in April. Early bird registrations will be accepted until May 31. The conference promises to be a great forum for our staff in pastoral positions.

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

Lee-Anne Perry (President) perryl@allhallows.qld.edu.au

PRAYER FOR LENT

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

**Mary our Mother, help us during this Lenten season
to be attentive to the will of your Son,
to be generous in our response to his call,
and to be loving in our service of those in need.
Mother of Mercy, pray for us.
Amen.**

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF

The task is to foster the faith of staff, as well as to foster and challenge their commitment to Catherine McAuley's values of mercy and justice.

Below are some starters.

There is also a section for you to fill in and send back to us. Replies from our members that reach us by March 31 will be collated and recycled to you.

1. STAFF NEW TO THE SCHOOL

IDEA: Set aside a meeting with all staff who are new to the school early in Term 1, with the agenda to include

- Acquainting them with the ethos of the school and establishing the expectation that they are to uphold school values

- Some background to Mercy values, the school's history, the Sisters of Mercy and Mercy works today
- Resources for discussion or reflection:
- "Catherine – a Reflection on Values from the Mercy Tradition", a 10 page booklet by Carol Estelle Wheeler rsm
- Mary C Sullivan's work
- Resources about the Sisters of Mercy:
- Mercy websites (see MSEA website <http://msea.mercy.org.au> - click on Resources – and then Best Websites for Mercy Day Preparation)
- "Mercy and justice shall meet" cd-rom

2. STAFF NEW TO TEACHING

IDEA: Have three interviews with these staff in their first year, the first early in term 1. On the agenda for each meeting is conversation about their personal needs and aspirations in relation to their professional development, and specifically development in relation to Religious Education, values, faith. Establish the expectation that formal study is needed. Are they a graduate of a Catholic University? Do they have any formal study of theology, scripture, church history, liturgy? What assistance is on hand for them to access such study (eg in their second year of teaching they can begin a Grad Cert RE, on-line, one unit at a time).

Do they have a Religion class? What support is there for them as teachers of RE at the same time as they, as young adults, are consolidating their own faith and values? (Sr Carmel Leavy's work is helpful to those mentoring young teachers.)

If they are non-Catholic, what formal study is available which is relevant to their subject areas? (Eg ACU has a unit in its Grad Dip RE on values which is relevant to PDHPE teachers who deal with many controversial moral issues in their curriculum area).

3. OTHER STAFF

IDEA: Make available to individual staff, according to their needs and aspirations,

- postgraduate study from a Catholic university in Religious Education, Theology or Religious Leadership

IDEA: Make available to all staff, including non-teaching staff

- Whole-school professional development eg involvement in processes for auditing the school's culture and values (Annette Schnieder's work is relevant here, and a copy of her paper given at the 2004 MSEA conference, "Seeking mission integrity: the Mercy school culture audit as a map-in-process for the journey" is available from the editor of this newsletter)
- Opportunities for prayer and reflection eg staff retreat day
- immersion programmes
- Opportunities to network with other Mercy educators
- Opportunities to better understand the present engagements and history of the Sisters of Mercy – use web resources and "Mercy and Justice Shall Meet" CD rom.

SEND US YOUR IDEAS FOR STAFF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Email to the editor: principal@catholichighschool.nsw.edu.au

Do You Have These Mercy Resources?

1. [A Mercy Story in Peru](#) – CD rom, 11mins 13 secs, about the Sisters of Mercy working among the poor on the outskirts of Lima. This is the same story as "Centres of Support and Skill" on the Mercy and Justice Shall Meet cd rom but is more suitable for younger students.

2. [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.

3. [A Reflection of Mercy, Prayer services, liturgies and resources for Mercy Schools and Communities](#), by Sandy Flaherty

[Request from Christopher Clott](#)

Attached with this newsletter is a request from Christopher Clott, from Saint Xavier University, Chicago, about bringing a group of tertiary students to Australia for a cultural immersion or service learning experience.

If you have an interest in making this connection, please get in touch with him directly.