



AMSSA

AUSTRALASIAN MERCY SECONDARY SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

<http://www.amssa.mercy.org.au>

Email: msea@mercy.org.au

Newsletter May 2008 No. 02/08

Welcome to the AMSSA Newsletter.

In this Issue:

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Page 1 | A Message from our President, Jane Holloway |
| Page 2 | Mercy at the Heart – Mercy WYD gathering on July 14 |
| Page 2 | The Young Mercy Justice Tree Conference - Report |
| Page 5 | Another reminder about the date for the 2009 AMSSA conference |

A Message from AMSSA President, Jane Holloway

World Youth Day is almost upon us, and many Mercy schools from among our members are sending pilgrims to Sydney. To be a pilgrim is to make both a journey in the outside world and a journey in the world of the spirit, and we are being asked to provide times of quiet for our pilgrims. This newsletter's prayer offers some thoughts for reflection.

Ann-Marie Herd is our contact for the Mercy at the Heart Conference on Monday July 14 at Monte Sant' Angelo College North Sydney. Over 700 students have registered for this event. The web address is www.mercywyd.org.au and Anne-Marie's contacts are: Phone 029630 9510, email amwyd08@tpg.com.au.

Follow-up from WYD will give us many possibilities to foster leadership and Mercy spirituality among our young Mercy people and to give them opportunities to network across Oceania. Their forum on the MercyWYD website will be a great starting point – encourage your students to visit. At our AMSSA executive meeting last week we gave support to looking to have future regular gatherings of Mercy students and ex-students. The article in this newsletter about the recent Young Mercy Justice Tree Conference is a sign of hope in what is already happening among the member schools.

Jane Holloway, Saint Catherine's College Kilbirnie janeh@stcatherinescollege.school.nz

Mercy at the Heart

Our World Youth Day gathering for young mercy minded people

MONDAY JULY 14

More than seven hundred Mercy students will be there, along with Mercy staffs and ex-students, and Sisters of Mercy.

- ***Has your pilgrim group visited the Forum on our Mercy WYD website?*** They can visit and register at www.mercywyd.org.au/forum/index.cfm
- Ann-Marie Herd, our Mercy Schools World Youth Day Coordinator, has been communicating with your about arrangements for the day. Her email address is: amwyd08@tpg.com.au



Registering for the week of WYD: If you intend to be involved in the WYD activities from 15 – 20 July, you need to register at the official World Youth Day website <http://egeria.wyd2008.org/>

THE YOUNG MERCY JUSTICE TREE CONFERENCE

by Sophie Bawden, Year 11, Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta

On Friday 22nd February Ms Herd and I attended the Young Mercy Justice Tree Conference in Mylor, Adelaide. This conference was a gathering of all the Mercy schools across WA, SA, VIC and NSW. The aim was to meet and discuss social justice issues and to share ideas between Mercy schools across Australia.



We were officially welcomed into the Young Mercy Justice Tree group by writing on a leaf something that we had done that we were proud of. We shared this with everyone else and then stuck it onto the YMJT Tree (it was just a painting not a real one). The leaves of all the previous members were scattered on the ground in front of it. The whole process was symbolic. We were the new members who were like the new leaves growing on the tree. They would eventually fall off but still always be a part of the tree.

We then split up into small groups to discuss activities and events that our school had held to raise awareness of important social justice issues and raise money for charity. This was very interesting and it was inspiring to hear about all the amazing things other people had done at their schools. This also was very useful as it gave me many ideas that I could bring back to my school.

After lunch we had a visit from Sister Meredith Evans who is a Sister of Mercy and the founder of the Young Mercy Justice Tree. She had just come back from a three week trip in the Philippines with some previous girls from the YMJT. Sister Meredith showed us a PowerPoint filled with photos and videos and told us stories about her trip. Before the trip, the girls and Sister Meredith had raised over \$9000 to support a hospital they were building and to support some schools in the local area. These girls had done amazing work. It was very inspiring to actually meet with people who had done something so wonderful and beneficial for others. It motivated me to want to do something similar.

After dinner we all headed back down to the chapel for our 'Sources of Inspiration' ceremony. For this each person had to bring an item of significance that was symbolic of their passion for social justice. I brought with me some photos and the song 'Feed the World' by Band Aid. Each person got up, lit a candle, and then spoke about their item of significance and why they were passionate about it. This was a very moving and very emotional ceremony that really inspired me and helped me realise how lucky I was to be surrounded by so many amazing people in the one room. One particular item that was really wonderful was a video made by one of the girls from Geelong in

Victoria. The video compared the life of an average Australian to the life of children and families living in Third World countries. This was a very touching video that brought many of us (especially me) to tears. The whole experience was just amazing and one that I will never forget. It made me feel so proud of everyone and so privileged to be a part of that group.

On Sunday morning we discussed many issues and events that we could hold and work together in. This was also very helpful as it gave me a lot of ideas and help with things we could do. After lunch, we then headed back down to the chapel for a modern day Stations of the Cross and Mass. We had to read the Stations of the Cross and then select one which most connected with us. We then had to write a prayer and reflection, which we then used as the Prayers of Intercessions during our Mass, which was beautifully led by Father Brendan.

The Young Mercy Justice Tree Conference was an absolutely amazing and inspiring trip that has truly changed me. It was a fantastic experience that I will always remember. I made so many wonderful new friends and I feel so proud to be a part of such an amazing group of people that I know will be with me for a long time. I cannot wait to meet up again with a lot of them at World Youth Day in July and again in Melbourne at the end of August. A very special thank you to Ms Herd for travelling with me and to the school for helping me get down there. It was an opportunity and experience that I truly appreciate and I know that I will treasure. I look forward to the journey that is ahead of me.

CLAIM THE DATE

Mercy values alive!

THE 2009 BIENNIAL AMSSA CONFERENCE

JULY 1 – 4, 2009

at the Mercy schools in Perth, WA

**Further information from Sr Frances Fitzpatrick
msea@mercy.org.au**