



AMSSA

AUSTRALASIAN MERCY SECONDARY SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

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

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Newsletter November 2009 No. 04/09

Welcome to the AMSSA Newsletter.

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A Message from AMSSA President, Jane Holloway

Many of the Mercy schools in the region took advantage of the recent Mercy Justice Conference in Queanbeyan organised by the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia. The focus of the conference was "Embrace the other and welcome difference", centring on urgent social justice issues on national and international agendas: refugees and asylum seekers, eco-justice, Indigenous concerns and the impact of poverty on women. Check the ISMA website for more details about the conference outcomes.

For our own conference, rescheduled for July 2011, we will still be inviting schools to send student delegates, just as we had planned for this year. Santa Maria College has offered to host the conference so that the visiting students can stay at the Santa Maria Boarding House. To cover some of the costs of using the boarding facilities, there will be a small registration fee for the student delegates. A new conference flyer will reach you early in 2010.

Best wishes to you all as this year comes to an end and as you make preparations for the next.

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

Spreading the Mercy Story...

In an effort to form strong links with Mercy schools throughout Australasia, the first stage of a student exchange between St Patrick's College, Townsville and our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta took place from the 18th to the 26th of July, 2009.

St Patrick's hosted four Year Ten students from Our Lady of Mercy College, Jessica Skippen, Jessica Grengaroli, Winsome Ng and Isabel Ivill. This was quite a cultural experience – the girls experiencing life in the northern tropics (finding their summer uniform was more than sufficient for the north's 'winter'!). Two of the students stayed in the boarding school, another very different life for them.

Attending classes with their hosts from St Patrick's (Kayoko Yamashita Tanisha Ahmat, Kirsten Fuller and Carly Rush) proved to be quite interesting, gaining an insight into Queensland's curriculum and enjoying different subjects to their normal ones back home.

The host families (Doolan, Fuller and Rush) showed warm hospitality and the students felt right at home. A trip to the theatre to see the musical "Jesus Christ, Superstar" and a day at Billabong Wildlife Sanctuary, not to mention some retail therapy, filled out their week in Townsville.

The St Patrick's students are now eagerly awaiting their time in Sydney – this will be the first week of the September holidays (19th-27th of September, 2009). While attending school at OLMC, the girls will be pleased to attend the celebrations of Mercy Day.

It is hoped that this exchange will be held annually, offering further opportunities to the young women to grow, develop and gain understanding of what it means to be part of the Mercy tradition.

from
Kathy Park
Principal
St Patrick's College
Townsville



Reflections a Sabbatical Journey – from Kitty Guerin, Principal of Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta

This year I was fortunate to be able to take a sabbatical term. The first part involved the four week Summer School at the American College in Leuven, Belgium. The opportunity to live in a small and beautiful European city close to so many other parts of Europe was wonderful and I can highly recommend it.

The last part of my sabbatical involved taking the opportunity to visit five Mercy schools along the East Coast of the United States. The five schools I visited were Our Lady of Victory Academy, Dobbs Ferry, New York, Catherine McAuley High School, Brooklyn, New York, Merion Mercy Academy, Philadelphia, Mercy High School, Baltimore and Walsingham Academy, Williamsburg, Virginia. The first four schools were all girls' schools and the last school was coeducational.



Our Lady of Victory Academy

What stood out from the time I started to plan my visits to the actual visits themselves was the warmth of each school's response to me. They were all pleased to welcome a visitor from the other side of the planet and they went out of their way to make my visit to them very special. This included all people I came in contact from the principal of the school, to the staff and students.

The other strong impression from every school was the strong Mercy presence in each school. Each school was very aware of its history and traditions and there were strong physical manifestations of Mercy visible to all. Unlike most of our Mercy schools, most schools still have a number of the Sisters of Mercy working in their schools. One school had a Dominican Sister as their principal. So the environment of each school felt very familiar with a very strong Mercy presence permeating all they did.



One of the great privileges I had was participating in the Mercy Day celebrations at Catherine McAuley High School in Brooklyn. It is a very small school with an enrolment of between 200 – 300 students, 40 of whom are involved in a boarding program run by two Mercy Sisters. Like many of our schools, at their Mercy Day liturgy, they inducted their new senior leaders for the year. What was impressive was the acknowledgement given to staff and students of their commitment to service in the community outside the school

environment. The staff and students were named and congratulated on their generosity.

The students were a credit to each of the five schools. They were generous with their time and keen to show me their schools. I was amazed at their uniforms – although when you think about it, it is not in the American culture to wear uniforms so the schools have to be reasonably flexible.



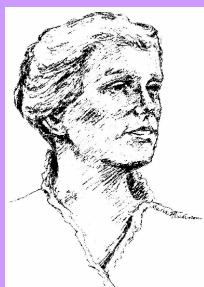
However in comparison to Australian schools, each school except one suffered in terms of the resources they had in comparison to Australian schools. One of the great benefits we have is the government support provided to both government and non government schools. The US Mercy schools have to fund themselves in everything – paying their staff and providing physical and educational resources. Occasionally they may be able to acquire a grant to fund a school project. Each school has to devote considerable resources to fundraising and even in the poorest school; their fees were considerably higher than the majority of our schools – around \$ 5 – 6000 US. The global financial crisis had badly affected most of the schools in terms of enrolments and the ability of their students to maintain fee payments. Even the staff are paid at a lower level to those who work in public schools (85% seemed to be the average). Therefore it is difficult to keep good teachers with experience. They were absolutely amazed to think that the Federal Government would provide money to buy computers, IT infrastructure and funding for building works!!!

It was a great experience touching base with our fellow Mercy educators in the US. I can highly recommend a visit – they were so delighted to see an Australian visitor. It was a worthwhile learning experience, one where I learnt a great deal but also very thankful of our system here where schools are well resourced because of government funding.

Kitty Guerin
Principal
Our Lady of Mercy College
Parramatta



Walsingham Academy, Williamsburg, Virginia



10th AMSSA Biennial Conference

6 – 9 July 2011

Santa Maria College

Perth, Western Australia

*The blessing of unity dwelling amongst us
is the true spirit of Mercy flowing on us*

Expect to receive a revised flyer about the conference early in Term 1 2010.

Schools will be invited to send two Year 11 student delegates to the conference, and schools are asked to cover a registration fee of \$50.00 for each of the two students, and travel expenses. AMSSA will meet all other costs for the two students.

From Catherine McAuley

Zealous Service

We may feel confident that Jesus Christ keeps an exact account of all we do for his poor, that He listens to every word we speak to them, to recompense each with God-like liberality. This should encourage us to love this duty, and to devote ourselves unreservedly to the acquisition of everything that would fit us for its fulfilment. It will lead us to undergo, with sweetness, all the labour and fatigue attendant in the care and instruction of children, and it will animate us with a burning zeal for their advancement in every virtue.

Familiar Instructions of Rev. Mother McAuley



“Sweet Mercy”

Sweet Mercy! Soothing, patient, kind:
softens the high and rears the fallen mind;
knows with just rein and even hand to guide
between false fear and arbitrary pride.
Not easily provoked, she soon forgives:
Feels love for all, and by a look relieves.
Soft peace she brings wherever she arrives,
removes our anguish and reforms our lives;
makes the rough paths of peevish nature even,
and opens in each heart a little heaven.



The Suscipe of Catherine McAuley

In the attachment with this newsletter is a pdf of the sheet music for a new setting of Catherine's Suscipe, from Paul Whitney, of Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta.

This work uses as its text, a resetting of the Suscipe of Catherine McAuley. Elizabeth Vidot, who transcribed the text, tried to stay closer to the original words of Catherine McAuley, whilst using more accessible language. Another important aspect of this work is an attempt to imbue a sense of ritual in the work, displayed with the repetition of verse 1 with slight variations in the music.

This work was composed as a gift to Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta in commemoration of their 120th anniversary.

It is dedicated to the College, its staff and all Mercy Girls past and present.

While copyright is retained by the composer, this work can be freely distributed to and performed by any organisation associated with the Sisters of Mercy.

A piano reduction of the instrumental parts are available upon request.

If the work is to be performed, it is asked that you inform the composer at music@olmc.nsw.edu.au