



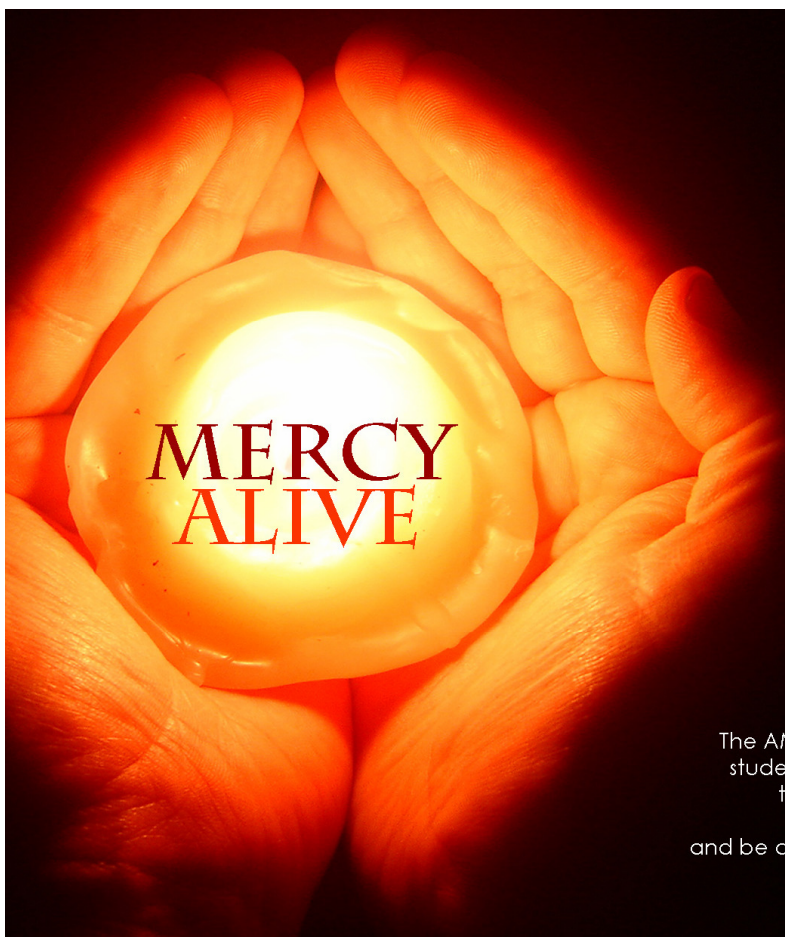
AMSSA

AUSTRALASIAN MERCY SECONDARY SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

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

Email: amssa@mercy.org.au

Newsletter March 2012 No. 01/12



SAVE THE DATE
13 - 16 July 2013
Auckland, New Zealand
AMSSA Conference
(Australasian Mercy Secondary
Schools Association)

The AMSSA Executive warmly invites staff and two students to the 12th Biennial AMSSA Conference; to honour the beginnings of our Mercy story, to celebrate our growth and unity, and be challenged to revitalise Mercy for the future.

Claim the conference dates in your 2013 diary!

In this issue are featured images and iconography of Catherine McAuley and of Mercy from Mercedes College Perth (page 2), Mercy College Mirrabooka (page 3) and All Hallows School Brisbane (page 4). On page 5 you will find a Mercy prayer.

We welcome a contribution from your school for next term's newsletter. Pass this message on to your development officer and ask them to send AMSSA one or two photos of images/paintings/symbols of Mercy and/or Catherine McAuley in your school, and add a few words of explanation if you wish. Email these to amssa@mercy.org.au. (Deadline Friday 18 May).

Mercedes College Perth

The beautiful bronze sculpture of Catherine McAuley commemorates the dedication of Sister Assisium to the community that is Mercedes and the nineteen years of 'giving it the best'. It was known that her only wish was to complete "Catherine's Garden" with a sculpture of the Foundress.

Mr Ian Barter, Mrs Theresa Gibson and Mrs Karen McLean, Board Chairman, conspired to fulfil Sister Assisium's wish and negotiated with the sculptor, an American Mercy Sister Marie Henderson, whose finished work was unveiled in the garden on 24 September, Mercy Day 1996. Present with the school community on the occasion were Sister Jan Geason, President of the Australian Mercies, and Mercy sisters from overseas – England, Ireland, America and Newfoundland, who were in Perth for the Sisters' celebrations of the 150th Year.

Ref: *Out of These Stones* (Sister Maureen Cream)



The Providence Row Chapel Windows (Mollie's Windows)

In 1997 I was visiting the Sisters of Mercy in the east end of London where the Order had been for over 100 years, and where they had a large Convent and refuge for destitute people. The Sisters told me that the property was being sold and a new refuge built in a poorer part of London. I remembered that the windows on either side of their altar in the Chapel had the same crest as our Mercedes crest, so I wrote to the Congregation Leader and asked her if no one else wanted the windows could we please have them for Mercedes. She replied "Mollie, when those windows come out they will have your name on them! About two years later two large wooden crates containing the windows were delivered to our office and those beautiful old windows now grace the College's newest building – the Serisier Learning Centre.

Sr Mollie Wright (Principal 1978-1996)

Mercy College Mirrabooka, Perth

Mercy College is blessed with an abundance of icons that reflect the strong ties and traditions that have been developed with the Sisters of Mercy over the forty years since establishment in 1972. Mercy College inherited its first students, staff, and most importantly its faith heritage from the original St Brigid's Convent school which was established in West Perth in 1888.

These strong ties have been reinforced through the naming of

Mercy College's Chapel of St Brigid following its consecration in 2004. The Chapel takes its name from St Brigid of Kildare, a famous fifth century Irish saint who was renowned for her promotion of mysticism and learning. She founded a monastery for women and men in Kildare which developed into a centre of learning, culture and education.

Set in the foundations of the Chapel that support the metal framework are the crosses of the



Sisters of Mercy embossed into each concrete support pillar. This brings to mind that the College was built on the work of the Sisters and that their spirit and ethos can never be removed from its rich fabric.

When entering the Chapel a jarrah bridge has been constructed to allow all those who enter to cross waters that have been collected from the four sacred wells of St Brigid; Kildare in Ireland, Catherine McAuley's foundation house in Dublin, St Brigid's Convent in West Perth and from our own waters in Koondoola. This mixing of waters represents the convergence of Mercy communities and the coming together of cultures and nationalities from around the world.



The logo of the Sisters of Mercy features prominently around the College grounds and is featured as a cornerstone for all to see that we are a Mercy community. The logo also takes a prominent position atop the Flynn building where it honours Sr Joan Flynn, Congregational Leader of the Sisters of Mercy and whose inspiration relocated St Brigid's Convent school to the current Mercy College site in 1972. Sr Joan purchased the land and supervised construction of what is now a thriving coeducational school catering for over 1600 students from a diverse range of cultures and nationalities.

Perhaps the strongest iconography that is featured around the College grounds and classrooms are the words of Catherine McAuley: *Our gift is to know God's loving kindness and to share it with others*. Through the relatively short history of Mercy College these words resonate the College motto of – *Love in Action* and over the generations have, and will, provide focus, stability and direction for our Mercy community.

All Hallows School Brisbane Catherine McAuley Sculpture

As part of its sesquicentenary celebrations, All Hallows' School commissioned a life size bronze of Catherine McAuley to be placed in the newly developed central courtyard in the School. The courtyard is named Catherine Court, recognising the significance of Catherine McAuley to the School and also the long history of the area where the courtyard has been built as a tennis or croquet court. The artist chosen for this special project was Meleisa Judge of Liquid Metal Studios in Adelaide. Meleisa had previously completed the Mary Ward bronze for the Loreto schools in Australia. The All Hallows' Parents and Friends Association generously agreed to fund the project. A School Advisory Reference Group was established comprising the Director of Mission, a teacher from the School Art Department and a current parent (all of whom are also past pupils of the School) together with a current student and the Principal. The Reference Group helped inform the artist on the Mercy and All Hallows' history, ethos and charism and provided feedback throughout the project.



All Hallows School Brisbane

The sculpture was unveiled in a special blessing ceremony on All Hallows' Day, 1st November 2011, and was the culminating event in our 150 year celebrations. The School invited the artist to portray Catherine in the early days of her ministry of Mercy, that is, as a young lay woman. The artist, Meleisa, gave considerable time and reflection to the detailed portrayal of Catherine and chose to depict her in the act of giving away her own shawl to someone in need, symbolic of her deep compassion and mercy to those in need. The sculpting technique used by Meleisa enabled her to create a sculpture with great detail and texture, including her beautiful boots (symbolic of Catherine's commitment to walking among the people). As no photographs or paintings of Catherine exist, Meleisa researched and drew on descriptions of Catherine written by those who knew her personally, including the writings of Sr Mary Clare Augustine Moore and Sr Mary-Anne Doyle. She also carefully researched the historical detail of clothing worn by women in Dublin during the period Catherine lived. The sculpture is positioned on a low plinth with a quote from

Catherine on each of the four edges so that these words provide a source of reflection and inspiration to anyone walking past the sculpture.

This sculpture is a beautiful and constant reminder of the legacy we inherit in this School and brings to us Catherine's presence in a special way each day. Members of the School community are invited to connect with Catherine by taking opportunities to walk by, stand near, sit with or touch the sculpture. Already our Catherine sculpture has become a very special and inspirational focal point for our community.

The conditions of the sculpture commission are such that further editions can be produced for other Mercy schools or institutions at a reduced cost. I am happy to provide details for anyone interested.

Lee-Anne Perry, Principal, All Hallows' School

A Mercy Prayer

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

Loving God, we pray for all those in need of your mercy.
We pray for those most vulnerable to oppression and neglect,
especially women and children.
We pray for all who seek a kind word, a gentle compassionate look
or the patient hearing of their sorrows.
We pray for the poor, the sick,
and those in need of knowledge and wisdom.
We pray for those who are in need of safe shelter and food.
We pray for all those we serve through the spiritual
and corporal works of mercy.
We pray for our partners in the ministry of mercy
throughout the world.

**Compassionate God, pour out your mercy on all your people.
May they feel your touch through our hands.
Amen.**