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NEWS

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EDITORIAL

by Judith Gardiner



RECENTLY, SR MARIE MELVILLE AND I TRAVELLED TO PERTH TO ATTEND THE AUSTRALASIAN MERCY SECONDARY SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION (AMSSA) CONFERENCE.

The theme of the conference was 'the blessing of unity dwelling amongst us is the true spirit of Mercy flowing on us' (Catherine McAuley). The stage backdrop was a magnificent image of a Western Australian gorge with a waterfall and deep pool – a refreshing well spring in the dry desert. The stage was set with a waterfall that was a continual reminder of flowing water.

A key scripture reading for the conference was John 4, the Samaritan Woman at the Well. Mercy Partners Councillors reflected on this reading, asking ourselves how this reading, and the theme of the conference, speaks to us as Mercy Partners.

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CHAIRPERSONS REPORT

DEAR PARTNERS IN MERCY

For the past few months I, and those of you belonging to the 'Brisbane fold', have been occupied with the various activities planned to celebrate the sesquicentenary of the Brisbane Congregation. There have been some wonderful occasions, with more to come. Perhaps the most significant for me was the pilgrimage I led to Ireland in June – 24 members of the Brisbane Congregation visited those places which were connected with Catherine McAuley, Ellen Whitty and the beginnings of our Brisbane story.

The event which stands out in my memory as I write was a bus trip to Wexford to visit the birthplace of Ellen Whitty. We viewed her entry in the baptismal register in the little parish church in Oylgate and then went down a muddy track to see the overgrown crumbling stone foundations of the home in which she spent her childhood. It is such a peaceful setting on the banks of the river Slayney, and I presume the view we saw that day was much the same as what Ellen would have seen as she played with her siblings beside the river. I found myself marvelling at how a little girl from rural Wexford could begin, in far-off Australia, a ministry of service which would still be flourishing 150 years later. Ellen would probably have been astounded also, had she been able to see into the future.

It led me to reflect that the Mercy story is essentially a re-telling of the Pentecost story, and an example of the parable of the mustard seed (Lk. 13: 18-19). I found myself humming the chorus line from the Paul Kelly song *From little things big things grow*. Big things indeed, if we look at the extent of Mercy ministry across Queensland today – big, not just in terms of size and extent, but more importantly, in terms of how many people are involved and how many lives are affected by our ministries.

The parallel with Mercy Partners is obvious – right now, we are small – an organisation waiting to receive and nurture the ministries which will be entrusted to us. But Mercy Partners too will grow, and develop in ways that we cannot possibly imagine right now. Like Catherine McAuley and Ellen Whitty and countless others before us we have to step out bravely, confident that the God of Mercy will guide our endeavours. In the words of the great Jesuit philosopher and visionary Teilhard de Chardin: *Only God could say what this new Spirit gradually forming in you will be.*

May God bless all our efforts to be and to do Mercy in our various ministries!



Above left: Bernadette Mewburn and Marie Melville rsm attend the June 2011 AMSSA Conference in Perth. Above right: Marie Melville reads the Gospel at the opening ceremony.

For me it was
 an outstanding
 conference, an
 exceptional
 venue and
 a rewarding
 Mercy
 experience

AMSSA 2011

by Bernadette Mewburn

As a delegate from a Mercy School in Townsville I was privileged to attend. Often opportunities come our way and this great conference was certainly one that I am now very glad to have said “yes” to attend.

The conference theme was **The blessing of unity dwelling amongst us is the true spirit of Mercy flowing on us**. The Conference certainly honoured the beginnings of the Mercy Story in Australia and together we were all able to celebrate our unity whilst being challenged to revitalise Mercy for the future.

We were very privileged to have with us a range of national and international speakers including Sister Mary Duffy rsm, Sister Sophie McGrath rsm and Anne Kelliher, CEO – CEIST (Irish Schools Trust).

A personal experience in which I was grateful to be part of was the pre-conference tour to New Norcia, the home of the Benedictine monks since 1847. To experience this place was something that will remain with me for a long time.

Also the memories of the “Heritage Tour” – a scenic trip on the Swan River, and the reflection regarding Sister Ursula Frayne and the arrival of the Sisters in Freemantle in 1846, the tour of Mercedes College, the Mass at the Cathedral, the Conference Dinner, the keynote address each day, the forums, the closing ceremony and many opportunities to share with like-minded people. All these are etched firmly in my mind.

Bernadette Mewburn is Assistant to the Principal – Residential at St Patrick’s College Townsville

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EDITORIAL

The story speaks to us on many levels: the gift of living water that enlivens and invigorates us, filling the spiritually thirsty; the acceptance of our ‘humanness’ and the gift of forgiveness that Jesus extends; Jesus’ growing awareness of his ministry beyond the Jews; the excitement of the re-

alisation that Jesus is, in fact, the Messiah – the one who was sent by the Father. At the same time the woman is challenged to see things differently – to worship in spirit and truth.

Our reflection helped us to understand Jesus’ willingness to engage with the woman who is not only a Samaritan, but one who is outside the boundaries

of society. Jesus engages with her in a religious discussion, challenges her and offers God’s mercy and compassion. The image of ‘the true spirit of Mercy flowing on us’ imagined by Catherine McAuley and challenging us, comes alive in this passage, as we contemplate the living water that Jesus offers, through us in Mercy ministries, to offer mercy to all who come.

TRANSFER OF MINISTRIES

By Berneice Loch

AS THIS NEWSLETTER goes to print, preparations are being advanced for the transfer to Mercy Partners of the ministries conducted by Mercy Health and Aged Care Central Queensland Limited. These ministries include five Mater Misericordiae Hospitals in Rockhampton, Mackay, Bundaberg, Yeppoon and Gladstone; Bethany, Leinster Place and McAuley Place, all Aged Care residential facilities in Rockhampton; The Range Village, The Bethany Village, Mercy Day Therapy Centre, and Mercy Day Respite Centre in Rockhampton; as well as Mercy Food Service and Mercy Linen Service.

This work of assembling information is mainly in the hands of Phillip Bauman, Board Secretary, who has been

working with other members of the Transition Committee: Leesa Jeffcoat, Chairman, and Paul Glenny and Gerard Houlihan from the board of MH&ACCQL; Ian Mill, CEO; Berneice Loch rsm, Chairman, and Grace Bartolo rsm and Margaret Dixon rsm from the Company Members. Work is also continuing on clarifying options regarding how land for ministry purposes could and should be held in the future.

There are still many matters on which it will be essential, or at least helpful, to have clarity before the transfer takes place. However, it is hoped that the transfer can take place in the next few months and certainly before the end of 2011.

TRANSITION COMMITTEE MEMBER PROFILES



Transition Committee members from left, **Leesa Jeffcoat, Ian Mill, Gerard Houlihan and Phillip Bauman.**

Leesa Jeffcoat

Leesa has been associated with the health and aged care ministries of the Sisters of Mercy since 1996 when she was appointed to the then Health Services Board. Upon incorporation of MH&ACCQL in 2001, Leesa was appointed Board Chairman. Leesa has extensive experience in the field of primary, secondary and tertiary education. She has held numerous senior positions in educational administration and is currently the Diocesan Director of Catholic Education for the Rockhampton Diocese.

Gerard Houlihan

Gerard's association with the health and aged care ministries of the Sisters of Mercy commenced with his appointment to the then Health Services Board in 1994. He has served as Board Chairman and had previously served on the General Administrative Committee of the Rockhampton Mater. Gerard is a partner in Rees R & Sydney Jones Solicitors. Gerard is highly respected in both the legal and wider community.

Paul Glenny (not pictured)

Paul was appointed to the Board from 1 October 2007. Paul is currently the Finance & Operations Manager for Moore Stephens (Qld) Ltd. A chartered accountant whose professional career has spanned almost 30 years with Ernst & Young and its predecessors, Paul retired from partnership with Ernst & Young in 2006. During his professional career Paul has worked with clients in a variety of industries and sectors and has developed a reputation as a specialist in the not for profit sector. Paul has been a Director or Committee Member of a number of not for profit organizations.

Phillip Bauman

Phillip has been Business Manager for the Rockhampton Sisters of Mercy since 1996 and he had a lengthy career in the areas of financial management and administration prior to this appointment. Phillip also currently holds the position of Company Secretary of Mercy Health and Aged Care Central Queensland Limited and he has held this position since the Company's incorporation in May 2001. Phillip also currently serves on the Board

of Centacare and Mater Health Services North Queensland Limited.

Ian Mill

Ian is the Chief Executive Officer for Mercy Health and Aged Care Central Queensland Limited. He began his career in healthcare in 1972 and has some 38 years experience in the Australian Health Industry working in both the Public and Private sectors in small rural and large metropolitan hospitals. Ian has also worked with Government departments and Area Health Services. Ian has held many positions on industry boards including the Chairman of the Private Hospitals Association of Queensland, the Speech Pathologists Board of Queensland and Deputy Chairman of the Board of the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE. He is also a surveyor with the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards and a member of the State Advisory Committee, a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and is a past president of the Australian Catholic Health Care Association. Ian is a current director of the Capricornia Credit Union.

PENTECOST HAPPENED AT A MEETING

By Carmel Dwan

A few years ago I came across this article by Fr Ron Rolheiser OMI and as when we celebrated the great feast of Pentecost I was reminded again of it. The following extract may hopefully arouse your curiosity to read the rest of this article as Ron goes on to point out that we need to achieve in our lives a balance between meetings and the need to withdraw to the quiet place as Master Eckhart once wrote, "There is nothing in the world that resembles God as much as silence ...".



Ron Rolheiser, OMI
Speaker, Columnist
and Author

Source: <http://www.ronrolheiser.com/columnarchive/?id=237>

IF YOU'RE SOMEONE who's at all concerned about community, family, church, justice, education, culture or civic issues, you will, no doubt, find yourself at a lot of meetings. A colleague of mine likes to quip, "When they write our history, they'll simply say, 'They met a lot!'".

Indeed we do. We meet a lot. There are an endless variety of issues that call for our participation in group discussion and community discernment: church issues, education issues, justice issues, moral issues, political issues, social issues, economic issues, and cultural issues. It's a bottomless well and all those meetings can seem like a huge waste of time and energy, a distraction to real work. Moreover, at a point, we can't help wondering too, "Are all these meetings changing anything? Would life be any different (other than more leisured and pleasant) if we stopped having all these meeting?". It's easy to grow tired, discouraged, and cynical about all the meetings we're asked to attend.

But we should keep something in mind: Pentecost happened at a meeting! One of the central events that shaped Christian history and history in general, happened not to an individual off praying alone or to a monk on a mountain-top or to a solitary Buddha meditating under a tree.

None of these. Pentecost happened at meeting and it happened to a community, to a church congregation assembled for prayer, to a family of faith gathered to wait for God's guidance. Moreover it happened in a common room, a meeting room, in one of those humble, church-basement type of rooms.

It can be helpful to remember that. Our search for God should take us not just into private places of quiet and contemplation but, equally, into meeting rooms ...

FORMATION RETREATS — BOOK YOUR PLACE NOW!



THERE WILL BE another Formation Retreat in Rockhampton at **The Haven, Emu Park** Rockhampton from 12-14 October. The theme is Catholic Identity, and an exciting program is planned. This is an opportunity for those who have already begun their formation program to take the next step, as well as a chance for newcomers to begin their journey.

This Formation Program has been well received by participants, who report that they have been able to deepen their experience of what it means to work in a ministry of the Church, as well as learn more about Mercy. Participants get to meet people from across Queensland who are working in Mercy ministries, and it is this cross-section of people and organisations that contributes to making the program so rich and rewarding.

In 2012, the first of the Formation Retreats will be held in Cairns from 14-16 March. The theme of this retreat will be Theology of Mission and Sponsorship, and it will take place at the **Mercy Conference Centre, Earlville**. So, begin your planning now!

If you have not yet registered for this next retreat, contact Sheryl Rowse at Mercy Partners on 07 32675840 or admin@mercypartners.org.au. Our website: www.mercypartners.org.au provides additional information.

For those who have already been to a Formation Retreat, you should have received your invitation to the **2011 Annual Gathering** to be held in Brisbane, at All Hallows' on 22 September. For further information contact Sheryl Rowse at Mercy Partners.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT



Judith Gardiner,
Executive Officer,
Mercy Partners

I BEGAN WORK as the Executive Officer for Mercy Partners on 2 May. It has been a busy and exciting time as I learn my way around the work of Mercy Partners Council. I hope over the next few months to meet many of you, and have already had the pleasure of meeting a number of people in the Congregation office in Rockhampton and also in Mercy Health and Aged Care Central Queensland. In early June I visited Rockhampton, Gladstone and Yeppoon accompanied by **Beverley Strong rsm**. It was a privilege to visit the facilities and get a sense of the great work that is being done.

Since the beginning of Mercy Partners Beverley has been the secretary of the Council, and has also assumed responsibility for managing the Mercy Partners accounts. She has done a great job, and Mercy Partners

Council appreciates her hard work and generosity, as well as the generosity of the Rockhampton Congregation Leadership team for releasing her to do this work. Over the next few months, the Mercy Partners office will assume responsibility for the accounts as we establish the office and make it ready for the transfer of ministries.

Over the next few months also I hope to put in place some strategies for effective communication between Mercy Partners Council and the ministries. This newsletter is a primary channel of communication and you are encouraged to distribute it widely so that as many people as possible become aware of Mercy Partners as an organisation of the Church in Queensland. As I travel around to the various ministries and meet people, I will be asking people to write some words about themselves and their work in the ministry.

From top right: (left) **Beverley Strong rsm**, (right) **Pam Zions** Manager Facility Mater Gladstone; (left) **Sr Andrina Ryan rsm**, (right) **Nat Wilson** Facility Manager; (standing) **Robyn Tetteroo** Facility Manager Leinster Place, (sitting) **Jo Ahern** Receptionist.



CHANGE AND YET NO CHANGE

SOME OF YOU will already be aware that from the end of 2011 several of the Mercy Congregations (and the Region of Papua New Guinea) will be forming into one new institute of Mercy. On the 3rd of August we received news that the new Institute was approved by Rome. Mercy Partners has been put in place by the four Mercy Congregations in Queensland: Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton and Brisbane. Since some type of reconfiguring of the Mercy World in Australia and PNG was already under discussion when the congregations began working together, the new entity was set up to take account of any of the possible changes. Three of the four congregations have elected to go into the new institute while Brisbane will be staying as a separate congregation. The implications for Mercy Partners are minimal in that the new institute will appoint three Steward Representatives to work with the fourth Steward Representative who is appointed by the Brisbane Congregation. In the structure of Mercy Partners the Congregations play a small but none-the-less significant role. Their most important function is to appoint four of the Councillors to the Council of Mercy Partners. They also need to approve of any change to the Constitution of Mercy Partners and sign off on its annual report to Rome. Finally, they need to approve any invitation for another Church entity to be admitted as a Steward.

150 YEARS A SUCCESS

Congratulations go to **Lee-Anne Perry** and the staff and students of **All Hallows' School** for the marvellous celebration of their 150 years last weekend. As a former student, teacher and principal of the school, I felt so privileged to be part of it all!

*Dates for
your diary*

12-14 October 2011
Catholic Identity
The Haven
Emu Park (Rockhampton)

14-16 March 2012
Theology of Mission and Sponsorship
Mercy Conference
Centre, Earlville (Cairns)

SEEING DIFFERENTLY



THAT POPULAR PUBLICATION, THE *READERS DIGEST*, THERE IS PUBLISHED REGULARLY, A SINGLE PHOTO, IN THE SECTION OF THE *DIGEST* ENTITLED: **LOOK! SEE THE WORLD DIFFERENTLY.**

Each photo usually deceives the eye because the photographer has used unusual lighting, or magnification, or juxtaposition, or some combination of these and other variables, which prevents us from seeing immediately what has been photographed. In order to determine what is in front of our eyes, we the readers, are forced to look differently at the photo, and be open to seeing things somewhat differently than usual. It is one of the really challenging sections of this publication.

In the Mercy Partners Council's Formation Program, designed and led by Sr. Marie Melville, we too are invited to "see things differently", because to do so is to engage in God's liberating Mercy. The term liberating, has two dimensions. Firstly, there is the dimension of being liberated **FROM**, in order to enter the second dimension, being liberated **TO** do or act.

Often, we are quite unconscious of our need to be liberated from anything. We may have become unquestioning, or not be reflective, about our attitudes, our prejudices, our unwillingness to become involved. If we are paralysed in these or other ways, there is little likelihood that we will be liberated to do anything, let alone be witnesses to God's mercy.

However, there is a sense in which as Councillors, we are trying to see each other differently. We were all appointed from different perspectives, but we also need to see that each Councillor is more than a title or collective background. This person is more than Congregational Leader; he is more than an educator; she is more than a religious sister; and together we are more than seven individuals.

Trying to discern and appreciate the gifts of each person, and sometimes differing gifts in differing circumstances, has become for us a particular way of "seeing differently". Of course, this seeing differently, doesn't just occur in the Formation section of our meetings, but rather challenges us when perhaps we least expect it ☒ in the complex interactions that occur during the business on the agenda.

*"The one who has hope,
lives differently"*

We are hopeful of making good progress with these challenges: for our sakes; for the sake of being liberated; and for the sake of providing the touch of God's mercy. As Pope Benedict XVI says, "The one who has hope, lives differently".

TAKE THE TIME ...

IN THIS TIME after the season of Pentecost, it is worth thinking about the outflowing of the Spirit amongst us. It is this Spirit flowing amongst us that gives us the grace to draw on the living water that Jesus offered the Samaritan woman at the well. It is this Spirit that calls us to think differently about ourselves and the world.

This might be a theme for your own reflection over the next few weeks. You might ask: How does this story of Jesus and the Woman at the Well speak to you about the mission of your ministry? How do you understand Catherine's words: the blessing of unity dwelling amongst us is the true spirit of Mercy flowing on us?

You might like to use the following prayer: Jesus, you walked among us and were moved to compassion for your people. The lame and the leper came to you and found healing. The tax collector and the prostitute came, and you believed in them. The woman, the marginalised Samaritan, sought living water and was amazed by your generosity and promise. Send us your spirit of union and compassion that we may make a home in our hearts for all the persons we meet. This day, Jesus, give us hearts that love. Hearts that look to the future you have planned for us. Amen.



CHRIST AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN AT THE WELL, HENRYK SIEMIRADZKI 1886

COMPASSION JUSTICE RESPECT HOPE

