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NEWS

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EDITORIAL

by Judith Gardiner

WHEN I WAS AT SCHOOL, AT ALL HALLOWS' SCHOOL IN BRISBANE, ONE OF MY FAVOURITE POEMS WAS *GOD'S GRANDEUR* BY GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS.

This poem, a standard piece for study, is well known and admired by many, though not always appreciated by the young! But this poem always makes me feel happy to be alive. It stirs me and makes me think of the wonderful abundance we enjoy in nature and in the rich tapestry of humanity. While Hopkins wrote in the northern hemisphere, of a time greatly different from our own, we can experience that same wonder and excitement at God's greatness and magnificence when we reflect not only on the bounty of nature but also the amazing talents and gifts of people who work in so many occupations across the Mercy ministries. So many people striving to care for the planet and its people.

We can get caught up in the day-to-day, the worries and difficulties of life; we can see in our newspapers and on television the misery and tragedy that affects so many; we can dwell on the hurt we feel when we have been wronged. But when we take the long view, and the wide view, we can see God's providence around us, his love working in our own lives and the lives of others. We can respond to the hurt, misery and suffering as Catherine McAuley did, and bring our resources to bear on alleviating the pain of others.

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CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

DEAR PARTNERS IN MERCY

The week of 19-25 September was a very busy one for me, and indeed for many of you, as it was the time of the major celebrations for the sesquicentenary of the

Brisbane Sisters of Mercy. I could not help wondering what Mother Vincent Whitty and her companions would have made of our celebrating the 150th year of their arrival with a conference, a book launch, a Mass of thanksgiving in the Cathedral, and a celebratory dinner at the Convention Centre. They arrived so quietly that their coming was unprepared for, and in their wildest dreams they probably never imagined that 150 years later, people would come from across Australia and beyond to commemorate the event. I was part of the organizing group for the Living Mercy Conference, and we have received much positive feedback about it. Besides the high quality of the keynote addresses and the workshops and papers presented, many commented on how good it was to meet Sisters from other groups and to catch up with their counterparts in Mercy ministries across Australia. As more than one said, 'People seemed so happy to be there right to the last session – no-one 'ducked off early'!

The conference was also the occasion for the Mercy Partners' Annual Gathering, and thirty-five of us met at the Mercy Heritage Centre for a short catchup and some refreshments. Not all had been able to come to the conference, so it was good to have another way of connecting. We had another opportunity to meet at the Formation session – with some new faces at that, including sisters Kathleen Tynan and Rosemary Gundy from the Presentation Sisters of Queensland.

The Leadership Formation Retreat also provided an opportunity to ritualise the formal transfer of Mercy Health and Aged Care Central Queensland into Mercy Partners. The Townsville ministries will also be transferred before the end of the year. These transfers will mark the beginning of a new stage in the life of Mercy Partners. We have been preparing for these events for over twelve months, so I am confident that all will go smoothly as these ministries pass into the sponsorship of Mercy Partners. The Mercy Congregations of Rockhampton, Townsville and Cairns will become part of the new Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua – Niugini on 12 December. This will not affect the operation of Mercy Partners, except that the new Institute will be able to appoint three of the Stewards. We wish the sisters of these congregations every blessing as they make the transition. These are momentous times for us all!

Yours in Mercy,

TRANSFER OF MINISTRIES

The process of transferring the ministries of the Rockhampton Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy is nearly complete.

THE APPLICATION TO transfer ministries to Mercy Partners was the result of much planning and hard work on the part of the Congregation and members of the Transition Group. It has been a mammoth task for everyone. The next steps are to develop the formal Transfer Agreement which outlines all the canonical and legal matters that are pertinent to the transfer. Anne Hetherington, Chair of Mercy Partners said Sr Berneice and her team are to be congratulated on the efforts they have made to date, as well as the trust they are investing in Mercy Partners. The ritual transfer took place on 13 October at The Haven, Emu Park.

The Townsville Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy, led by Marie Melville rsm have also entered the final stages of transfer and Mercy Partners has accepted their transfer proposal in principle. The Townsville Transition Group will now put together the formal documentation for consideration by Mercy Partners. The Townsville team aim to have their transfer approved by the end of

November. This is indeed an exciting time for Mercy Partners, and the Congregations.

What will the transfer mean for the ministries? How much change will there be?

For the ministries, in terms of the day-to-day business of the ministry, not a great deal of change will be evident. Facilities will run as they continue to do, but instead of the guiding hand of the Congregation Leader and her team, Mercy Partners will assume a range of governance responsibilities. The Boards of the companies will report to Mercy Partners, and Mercy Partners, as the sole member of each company, will hold the same reserve powers that the Congregation currently holds.

On another level, over time we should expect to see a vision for the future of the organisation emerge, and this will become real for people as they begin to recognise that they are part of a new, emerging entity within the Church in Queensland. The Sisters, as Stewards will still encourage us all to continue in the healing and educative mission of the Church. We will still be part of the great tradition of the work of the Sisters in Queensland, and we will establish a productive relationship with the new Institute of the Sisters of Mercy in Australia and Papua New Guinea.

Mercy Partners will continue to rely on the great work being done in all the ministries by such talented and gifted individuals. This will be the strength of the future.

FAREWELL TO DR LORNA MOXHAM

Dr Lorna Moxham, a Director for MH&ACCQ has recently tendered her resignation as Director. She has accepted the appointment of the inaugural Professor of Mental Health Nursing at the University of Wollongong from early in 2012. Congratulations Lorna from the Mercy Partners Council and all who work in Mercy ministries.

As Lorna conveyed to Leesa, Chair of MH&ACCQ, it is a "new chapter and a new journey" in her life. We all wish Lorna every future happiness and success in the writing of that chapter and the travelling of that journey.

ON THE GRAPEVINE ... we hear congratulations are in order for the Rockhampton Mater Hospital upon their donation to the Ulysses Club Capricornia Branch's recent Spina Bifida Association fundraiser.

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EDITORIAL

This issue of our newsletter features some thought about the season of Spring, and its abundance, renewal and growth. This issue also features the transfer of the Rockhampton Congregation's ministries, the tangible beginning of a new era.

I was privileged to visit Townsville recently and enjoy the hospitality of the people working in the ministries there. The Townsville Congregation plans to transfer its ministries to Mercy Partners before the end of 2011 – a very significant event in the life of the Congregation and its ministries. In this issue we hear from Geraldine O'Brien, as a Director of Mater Health Services North Queensland.

In our next edition of the newsletter, we will feature others who work for Mercy ministries.

God's Grandeur (Gerard Manley Hopkins)

*The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; Bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.*

*And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs –
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah!
bright wings.*



MILESTONE FOR THE SISTERS OF MERCY OF ROCKHAMPTON



Sisters Anne and Berneice sign the Transfer Agreement

ON THE 12TH OCTOBER, the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy of Rockhampton transferred the canonical responsibility of Mercy Health and Aged Care Central Queensland Ltd (MH&ACCQL) to Mercy Partners.

The transfer took place in the MacKillop Room at The Haven at Emu Point, a retreat and conference facility owned by the Sisters of St Joseph in the presence of the Council of Mercy Partners ministry colleagues from each of the Mercy Congregations and with Fr John Hogan officiating on behalf of Fr

John Grace, Vicar General for the Diocese of Rockhampton. The ritual included a 'remembering' of the establishment of the first Sisters of Mercy to work in the Diocese, paying tribute to the work of the many Sisters of the Congregation who have worked tirelessly in education, health and aged care for over 130 years. In a message to the gathering Fr John Grace said, To the Leaders and Members from Sisters of Mercy Congregations along with those who competently oversee those Apostolic Works being entrusted to Mercy Partners, the endorsement of the past and the appreciation of the present, for these ministries, surely ensures a splendid future. Bishop Brian Heenan, who is currently in Rome, always honours both the Sisters and all who minister with them. He sends his blessing on this grace-filled new venture.'

Chairman of MH&ACCL, Ms Leesa Jeffcoat said the Directors who serve on the Board felt privileged to be asked to exercise an ongoing governance role in the health and aged care ministries so well established

and nurtured for almost a century by the Rockhampton Sisters of Mercy.

"The Directors are very aware of the historical significance of the transfer of canonical responsibility for these ministries from the Sisters to Mercy Partners and we look forward to working closely and cooperatively with the Mercy Partners Council to continue the healing ministry of Jesus Christ in the world of today and tomorrow" Ms Jeffcoat said.

LOOKING FORWARD

THE SISTERS OF MERCY in Townsville plan to transfer their ministries to Mercy Partners later this year. One of the ministries, Mater Health Services, like other Mercy ministries has a strong commitment to offering excellence in patient care. The Mater has continuously met and exceeded patient standards through employing dedicated and skilled staff and utilising the latest in medical equipment and technology.

The hospital services live by the Sisters of Mercy values of spirituality, compassion, excellence in care, respect and justice. The means that staff are treated with the same respect as their patients, making the Mater a popular workplace for health professionals from all over the world. With two campuses - the main site in Pimlico and another at Hyde Park that specialises in women's and children's care - Mater Health Services North Queensland provides the ultimate in modern health services.

Mater Health Services North Queensland's Board of Directors comprises a diversity of professional backgrounds, blending contemporary health care expertise with business acumen. This mix of unique skills and experience means Mater Health Services North Queensland is well-equipped to fulfil its mission and preserve its values.

In this issue we hear from Geraldine O'Brien, as a Director of Mater Health Services North Queensland. In our next edition of the newsletter, we will feature others who work for Mercy ministries.

FROM BOARD TO WARD

by Geraldine O'Brien

For me, being a Director on the Board of the Townsville Mater Hospital has given greater depth to my spirituality and expanded my thinking, knowledge, relationships and opportunities. I see great value in the history, traditions, spirituality and culture of the Catholic Church. Therefore, I am truly fortunate to be a Director, on a Board which, through the Sisters of Mercy, is part of the Catholic Church. As luck would have it my interest in the area of bioethics and philosophy led me to the role I now have, and from which I gain so much.

My approach to all Board matters can be summed-up by a phrase I heard at the recent CHA conference ... **FROM BOARD TO WARD.**

This phrase reflects what, I think, should be at the core of all Board deliberations: What impact will this decision have on those in the Wards of our hospital?

Because Mater Townsville is a Board of Governance, there is limited opportunity or necessity in an operational, management context, for direct interaction with staff,

VMOs and patients. Therefore, it is all the more important to ensure we put a 'human face' on all our Board deliberations. Not always an easy question to answer given the strategic nature of our Board, but a pivotal one nonetheless. Mission provides a key to this.

Through Mission we are the presence of Christ to every person in our hospital and Mater family. Similarly, through Mission we see Christ's presence in every person in our hospital and Mater family; Christ there: in new life, in suffering, distress and death.

I wish I could say I have the magic formula for being Christ's presence and seeing Christ's presence in our hospitals, but I don't. However, when working with people of goodwill and great goodness I have learned that, even when the going gets tough, through commitment, prayer and good relationships we continue to do what we can to 'be' Christ and 'see' Christ throughout our Mater.

Geraldine O'Brien is Board Director of Mater Health Services North Queensland

Thirty-five past and present participants of the leadership formation programme attended the third annual gathering at the Heritage Centre of the Sisters of Mercy Brisbane Congregation on Thursday 22 September 2011.



MERCY PARTNERS FORMATION PROGRAM

ANNUAL GATHERING

by Beverley Strong rsm

AMONG THE ATTENDEES there were Congregation Leaders, Stewards and Councillors of Mercy Partners, Company Members and Directors of Boards of Ministry Companies, executive staff of ministries and friends of Mercy Partners. At the same time this gathering was happening a small group were meeting in Sydney.

Because the majority of attendees came fresh from of the 150 Year 'Living Mercy' Conference some of the sharing was around reflections on the presentations and workshops from the conference.

Comments and questions that were made included:

- The importance of relationships with people
- Involvement of the young

- Spirituality of struggle and the challenges of maintaining a Catholic Identity in a multi-faith society
- What enables us to talk and walk a common language?
- What is Mercy about in relation to sustainability?

A common thread was that everything is part of the Mercy of God – care for the earth, care for animals – care for human beings. Mercy is universal and not just something I do. Mercy is a way of living. I came away from this gathering with a sense that the Annual Gathering helps in the building up of the community of people associated with Mercy Partners. There was an experience of Mercy among the people present.

Beverley Strong is Secretary to the Mercy Partners Council.



Top (left-right): Jean Gormely rsm, Bob Campbell; **Above** (from left): Fiona Williams, Bob Nicholls and Nina Burra rsm; **Right** (left-right): Faye Kelly, Don Hubbard, Paul Glenny, Garry Everett, Anne Henderson, Bob Campbell.

MERCY DAY

by Moira Truelson



Moira Truelson
presents at the recent
Formation Program

IN THE MONTH of September we celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Mercy, which holds a special place in the lives of the Sisters of Mercy. To be known as a sister of mercy is a privilege and a reminder that the mercy of God is the very soil in which life is grounded and nurtured. In the Hebrew scriptures, Mercy comes from the word for "womb".

This imagery holds all that is life-giving and relational. For those who hold mercy as their name it means always being moved to act on behalf of the those who suffer. One description which is particularly powerful is: '...mercy (compassion) is kindness of the mind that mirrors spaciousness of the heart'. In allowing the heart to open to all in need,

horizons are extended beyond what we could hope for or imagine.

Spaciousness of the heart is vital to the life of Mercy Partners. Mercy has all the potential for 'birthing' which constantly calls us to see, judge and respond to the world in which we live. It requires ongoing openness to others as we depth our understanding of 'partners'. In a relational sense it asks us to live into real community by 'relating creatively'. Mercy asks for a letting go of things as they were, in order to embrace a living movement into the future.

As Councillors we are working to support the ministries we have been called to serve. At times, during these early days, we may think the quotation about Mercy has a flip side because, while there is an abundance of 'kindness of the heart' we pray for a 'spaciousness of the mind' to contain and deal with all that is needed to ensure the ongoing future of these very special ministries.

Moira Truelson is Mercy Partners Treasurer.



Spaciousness of the heart is vital to the life of Mercy Partners



NOTHING IS SO BEAUTIFUL AS SPRING

(Hopkins)

IN THE LENGTHENING OF DAYS
SHOOTS AND BUDS EMERGING
FROM WINTER'S COLD GROUND
A. WE SEE THE CREATOR'S HAND

IN THE SIGHT OF A TINY LAMB
JOYFULLY BOUNDING
ACROSS HILLSIDE
A. WE SEE THE CREATOR'S HAND

IN THE BRILLIANCE OF A DAWN OVER THE OCEAN
SHIMMERING AND RESTLESS
THE TOUCH OF WARM BREEZE ANNOUNCING THE DAY
A. WE SEE THE CREATOR'S HAND

Creator God, forgive our moments of ingratitude,
the spiritual blindness that prevents us
from appreciating the wonder that is this world,
the endless cycle of nature,
of life and death and rebirth.
Forgive us for taking without giving
reaping without sowing.
Open our eyes to see
our lips to praise
our hands to share
and may our feet tread lightly on the road.

This is your garden, Creator God
A thing of beauty
Beyond understanding
A poem that is being written
Not in words
But in colours
Wind's whisper
Soaring bird
Snowdrop's petal
Gentle rain
Sunlight's warmth
This is your garden, Creator God
A thing of beauty
Beyond understanding.

*Adapted from: <http://www.faithandworship.com>
Under Creative Commons License: Attribution. Read more
at: http://www.faithandworship.com/Prayers_Spring.htm#ixzz1W5VaqJ6X
Under Creative Commons License: Attribution.*

"God, thank you for Spring and for the hope of warmer, longer, brighter days. Thank you for the coming of growth and life and birth. Thank you that things are coming awake in the world. This is what our calendar says, and we do see some signs that it is real. Now we ask that you would bring into reality all that belongs in this season. Your word says that we will have provision, and hope, and joy, and health, and loving relationships here and now in this life. Now we ask that what belongs in this season would become actual in our practical lives. Let everything in our lives as they are supposed to be. We hope in you and in your promises. We hope in your gift of Spring."

Date for your diary

14-16 March 2012

Theology of Mission and Sponsorship
Mercy Conference
Centre, Earlville (Cairns)

Information and an application form will be
circulated in November

In our next issue, the last for 2011, we hope to feature some thoughts on the nature of stewardship as well as profile the Townsville ministries in more detail. We will also report on the recent Leadership Formation Retreat.

COMPASSION JUSTICE RESPECT HOPE

