

# MERCY PARTNERS NEWS

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ANNE HETHERINGTON RSM  
CHAIRPERSON, MERCY PARTNERS

## From the Chair

*Dear Friends*

THIS YEAR, ONE of my New Year resolutions was to see more movies, having managed to get to only four in 2013. So far for 2014, I've only

seen one, but it was the day after Carmel Dwan reminded me that the Mercy Partners value which will be in the spotlight this year is respect. The film I saw was *The Railway Man*, and in it I found much to ponder in relation to respect.

The Mercy Partners website defines respect as honouring 'the integrity and diversity of creation'. Central to this is the basic respect we owe to each other as fellow human beings, created in the image of our God. While a good film such as *The Railway Man* contains many themes and can be read at many levels, the central message I took from this particular film was that if we lose this basic respect for whatever reason, our lives can degenerate into a spiral of bitterness and hatred which can have disastrous consequences.

Eric Lomax (played by Colin Firth) lost respect for his Japanese captors because of their excessive cruelty. His Japanese tormentor Takashi Nagase,

on the other hand, had no respect for his English captives because they did not adhere to the Japanese wartime code of 'death before dishonour'.

We can lose respect for people because of wrongs or hurts they inflict on us, but perhaps less obviously and more insidiously, we can also lose respect for people because their cultural values and mores are different from our own. Lomax returns to the scene of his torture bent on revenge, but it is only after he realises that Takashi also suffered because of what he had done, that Lomax is able to abandon revenge and let go of the demons that were destroying him. United by their common humanity and their common bond of suffering, Lomax and Takashi became firm friends.

Eric Lomax would probably not have seen himself as a 'Jesus' figure, but in the way he forgave his enemy, and triumphed over the bitterness which threatened to consume him, we can hear echoes of Jesus' exhortation to 'love your enemies ...' (Mt 5:43ff) and his willingness to forgive even those responsible for his crucifixion (Lk 23:34). As we move towards the time of year when the great events of Jesus's passion, death and resurrection are commemorated, the challenge is to see

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PHOTOS: © ALL HALLOWS' SCHOOL AND WATER HEALTH SERVICES NORTH QUEENSLAND

JUDITH GARDINER  
EXECUTIVE OFFICER, MERCY PARTNERS



# From the Executive Officer

BY THE TIME THIS NEWSLETTER IS DISTRIBUTED, 2014 WILL BE WELL UNDERWAY, AND WE FIND OURSELVES IN THE SEEMINGLY CONTINUOUS ROUND OF DEADLINES, MEETINGS AND EVENTS.

**THERE WILL BE** some wonderful opportunities coming our way this year, as well as challenges. We have begun the season of Lent, a time of reflection and preparation for the great feast of Easter – the resurrection in which we share.

For the Council of Mercy Partners, 2014 will be an historic year with the transfer of two ministries by the Presentation Sisters of Queensland: St Rita’s College Ltd at Clayfield and St Ursula’s College Ltd in Yeppoon. The Congregation has been preparing for this transfer for some time now, and the Boards of each College are completing all the required tasks before the formal transfer.

The Council of Mercy Partners has also launched its new website, and we hope that you find it to be a source of information and encouragement. We have been working on it behind the scenes and it is now ready for you (see page 5). Please send us your feedback.

A highlight of early 2014 was the Mary Reynolds rsm visit to Queensland. Mary shared with us her wisdom and experience on the way of Mercy in our global world. She presented workshops in Brisbane,

Rockhampton, Townsville and Cairns, and this newsletter records some of the highlights.

Sr Carmel has a reflection for us on Lent, as well as an update on the Leadership Formation Retreat which will take place in Brisbane from 2-4 April. This will be an opportunity for us to come together again as a community celebrating mercy and mission.

As we move into Lent towards Easter, we are called to think about the ministry of Jesus which begins with his baptism related to us in Matthew’s gospel. Matthew encourages us to think about the great revelation of the Trinity. As Jesus, a human like us, is immersed in the Jordan River, the river that the ancient Israelites crossed to enter their new life in the Promised Land, the Father and the Spirit are revealed. Our baptism invites us into that life of the Trinity. Through our Baptism we are called to share in the great endeavour of bringing forth the Kingdom of God. As we walk with Jesus’ disciples from Jesus’ baptism to his death, then resurrection, we will be reminded of the many ways in which we share in the life of the Trinity. “We who are baptised into

Him are called to participate in this ongoing redemptive mission.”

The Christian vocation, no matter what our state in life, job, or specific response to God’s call, is to reveal the Love of the Trinity to the entire human race, to bring them to the Waters of Baptism in order to encounter the Lord and experience New Life and be incorporated into the new humanity of the Church, which is the Body of Christ.” (Catholic.online)

This was the message of Mary Reynolds, when she reminded us that Catherine McAuley responded to the poor and helpless of her time, the ‘refugees’ of the penal laws and the Industrial Revolution as a lay woman for 52 of her 62 years. Her response was Mercy. What is our response in our time? This newsletter provides highlights from around the ministries as we begin 2014 with new initiatives, enthusiasm and hope.

## FROM THE CHAIR

Continued from page 1

that the things which unite us as sons and daughters of God are ultimately more important and more life-giving than the hurts and cultural differences which can divide us. Would Australia be a better place if, for example, we stopped seeing refugees and asylum seekers as social and political problems to be solved, and looked on them as fellow human beings fleeing persecution and hardship? I certainly think so. We all work in ministries where we give to others in various ways, but the greatest gift we can give to another is to treat him or her with respect. At our Mercy Partners Annual Gathering in July, we will be exploring this

fundamental Christian virtue further. I hope that many of you will be able to attend.

I wish you and your families every blessing for the great Christian feast of Easter, and hope that you will experience some of the joy of the risen Christ .

Yours in Mercy

# Gathering from the grassroots

The consultation process for the **2014 Synod on the Family** deserves our close attention because it may become a model for future synods, says **Garry Everett**.

I CANNOT RECALL in my life a time when the Vatican asked the laity directly for their views on any matter affecting the universal Church. I do recall, sighing wistfully, that the bishops never consulted the laity about any synod which they were attending. The recent Synod on Evangelisation is a good example.

So it was a complete surprise when Archbishop Baldisseri, the Secretary of the Vatican Synod of Bishops, said recently, “The consultation must gather information from the grassroots...”. The October 2014 Synod on the Family may be historic for this reason alone.

The consultation process deserves our close attention because it may become a model for future synods.

The consultation instrument, or survey, was designed by experts, according to Baldisseri. It was sent to bishops only with a request that the laity be consulted. Herein we encounter the first of many procedural problems.

The survey is couched in language we might call “Vaticanese”, with many references to philosophico-theological matters beyond the experience of most lay Catholics. This led some bishops to translate the survey, with the result that one could never be sure whether respondents were answering the same questions.

Secondly, some dioceses advertised the survey widely, while some did not. Some advertisements were online which probably disadvantaged those who do not have ready access to computers. Some parishes had never heard of the survey; some parishes held discussion groups, and some did not. This rather ad hoc set of ways of dealing with the survey, naturally led to another difficulty.

Thirdly, it is impossible to know at this stage what is represented by a parish response. Is it the views of the majority who attended the discussions? Did those

who attended constitute a minority of the parishioners or a larger percentage of the congregation? What happened to dissenting views? Finally, when all the parish replies were collated, what conclusions might be drawn from the variety of replies? I will take up this question as part of my comments on the next problem.

Fourthly, in some, perhaps all dioceses, there were replies from small groups and individuals which were not sent to the diocesan bishop. There was a capacity to

“... we must be willing to admit to ourselves the difference between what we are and what we want to be”

send the replies directly to Archbishop Baldisseri in Rome. It is always difficult to gauge the weight to be given to these replies, in terms of their importance. They might be small in number, but may have very valid and significant comments to offer. Hopefully the expert panel considering all the replies will find a way to deal with these non-diocesan contributions which is technically defensible and affords justice in the process.

Aside from the procedural problems, I can identify a few specific issues which were the subject of much discussion in the various real and online groups in which I participated.

**Issue 1:** Many people noted that there is no definition or description of the term “family” which is at the heart of the survey. There does appear to be an assumption that the term equates to the nuclear family – mother, father and their biological children. If this is the case, then it is unfortunate. The modern world recognises a wide acceptance of the term family: blended, which has parents who share the child-raising of non-biological children; homosexual families, in which children are raised by two fathers or two mothers; families in which the children are the result of IVF processes, and hence may not be biological offspring of the parents; and

single-parent families. The assumption that the Christian model of family is somehow normative in the world today is a rather limiting approach for the survey to adopt.

**Issue 2:** Nowhere in the survey do we find the word “love” mentioned. There is no acknowledgement that in families many serious decisions are based on some form of love. Again, it seems to be assumed that Catholic couples make their decisions based on the Church’s formal teachings about the family. The reality is

probably quite different. The experience of the awe and power of human love is often the primary motivation for the actions that occur in most families.

**Issue 3:** The section dealing with Natural Law assumes a philosophical and theological literacy that is not common among the laity. The survey asks a series of questions about how Natural Law affects aspects of society, families, civil institutions, marriage, and even non-practising Catholics. Most lay Catholics would find it difficult, if not impossible to answer such questions.

**Issue 4:** The survey also assumes that the laity has a deep, integrated understanding of the Vatican documents relevant to Catholic teaching about families. It will not be surprising to learn that this is not the case, and that in fact, significant catechesis on the family has been lacking for many decades. The laity, in general, has only a passing knowledge of the documents referred to in the survey. One major reason for this is that the documents are written in a mainly esoteric and inaccessible style.

So what might be the outcomes of the October Synod on the Family? Here are four possible outcomes.



CARMELO DWAN RSM  
MERCY PARTNERS  
FORMATION CO-ORDINATOR

# From the Formation Corner

OUR FIRST RETREAT FOR 2014 ON **LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE IN A CATHOLIC MINISTRY** IS COMING UP VERY SOON ON APRIL 2-4.

WE LOOK FORWARD to welcoming the Archbishop and to hear him speak to us on “Leadership and Governance in a Catholic Entity”. This will be followed by input from Dr Mary Coloe pbvm on “Spirituality of Leadership” and our third significant input will be from Sr Anne Hetherington on “Mercy Partners – Theology of Sponsorship”. We have approximately 35 – 40 registered participants for this retreat so we look forward to an enriching experience.

Other dates to note: Annual Gathering Cairns, July 18-19, Retreat on “Catholic Identity” October 15-17.

Once again we look forward to an exciting year.

I am writing this on Ash Wednesday the day we begin our 40 days journey to Easter and I put before you for your consideration, the invitation by Catholic Religious Australia to participate in a National Lament for Asylum Seekers – a campaign of prayer, penance and action for people seeking asylum in Australia.

This campaign takes its inspiration from Pope Francis when he visited Lampedusa.

## National Lament



“We are a society which has forgotten how to weep”

– Pope Francis

Many people throughout Australia are disturbed by the punitive and harsh policies and conditions to which people seeking asylum in Australia are being subjected. The recent incident on Manus Island including the death of one person and injury of many others, highlights the lack of care and dignity in the policies

of both the Government and the Opposition, and the absence of awareness of their legal and moral responsibilities.

We [Catholic Religious Australia] are seeking to make a Christian response to these people, rather than treating them as a ‘problem’ to be solved.

The National Lament will involve:

- > Engaging in prayer, penance and action for people seeking asylum in Australia
- > Making Friday in Lent a day of prayer and penance for people seeking asylum
- > Continuing this practice after Lent through to the Ascension
- > Writing to one’s Federal member and to the Minister, Scott Morrison MP, expressing our lament for people seeking asylum in Australia.

### OUR LAMENT

- > We lament the lack of compassion for people seeking asylum in Australia
- > We lament the denial of human dignity and freedom
- > We lament the indifference
- > We lament our inability to turn the tide

### OUR CHALLENGE

“The other” is no longer a brother or sister to be loved, but simply someone who disturbs my life and my

comfort ...

In this globalised world, we have fallen into globalised indifference. We have become used to the suffering of others: it doesn’t affect me, it doesn’t concern me; it’s none of my business!” – Pope Francis, Lampedusa 8.7.2013

### OUR PRAYER

We beg forgiveness for our indifference to so many of our brothers and sisters. God, we ask your pardon for those who are complacent and closed amid comforts which have deadened their hearts; we beg forgiveness for those who by their decisions on the global level have created situations that lead to these tragedies. Forgive us Lord! – Pope Francis, Lampedusa 8.7.2013.

Further information can be obtained from the website [catholicreligiousaustralia.org](http://catholicreligiousaustralia.org)



## Formation diary dates

### Leadership and Governance in a Catholic Ministry

**Date** April 2-4, 2014

**Venue** Robertson Gardens Brisbane

Understanding Governance and Fiduciary Responsibility within a Catholic Ministry; the Organisation Aspects of the Catholic Church including Canon Law; understanding Mercy Partners Sponsorship – Mission, Structures and Responsibilities; acknowledging the need to Resource the Mission and Ministry, balancing Mission and Business.

### Catholic Identity

**Date** October 15-17, 2014

**Venue** Robertson Gardens Brisbane

Understanding the significance of Catholic Identity and the role of the Laity within Ministries; understanding the significance of Catholic Identity and the role of the Laity within present Ministries; Catholic Social Teachings and their relevance to ministries today; developing a personal Spirituality for a Leader; connecting to the local church community, others and building partnerships.

### Annual Gathering

**Date** July 18-19, 2014

**Venue** Seville Mercy Conference Centre, Cairns. Details to come.

## GRASSROOTS

Continued from page 3

**Outcome 1:** The Synod will call for a re-expression of the Church's teachings on the family. This will lead to the teachings being more closely aligned to the experiences of people's lives. The teachings will also be expressed in a language that the ordinary lay Catholic can access and understand.

**Outcome 2:** The Synod will call for a new and improved catechesis on the family, to include new material from the secular (for example, psychological) sciences about the priority given to love in the lives of families. This new material will strengthen the existing teaching and, perhaps, even bring such teaching up to date for contemporary times.

**Outcome 3:** The Synod may decide to continue or discontinue the process of consulting the laity on synodal matters. A statistically large response would encourage the Vatican to try this approach again. A statistically small reply from the world's lay Catholics might raise serious concerns. It could signal a lethargy or a disinterest on the part of the laity in what the Vatican says or does about any matter to do with Catholicism. The Vatican may not wish to use consultation with the laity again.

**Outcome 4:** The Synod may encounter a "reception" problem. When the outcomes are announced, the faithful must decide their response. How teachings are received is a vitally important part of the Church's life. At present, the hierarchy of the Church has lost a great deal of credibility when speaking about love, sex, power and relationships. The faithful will require that this credibility be restored before new teachings are embraced. Handled well, the Synod could be a vehicle to help in that restoration process.

As US Benedictine nun, Joan Chittister, wrote recently: "Self knowledge is the key to self development. But first we must be willing to admit to ourselves the difference between what we are and what we want to be".

*Reprinted with permission from **The Good Oil**, February 18, 2014*



## New website for Mercy Partners

On Tuesday, March 11 Mercy Partners launched its new content-rich website. Visit the website at [www.mercypartners.org.au](http://www.mercypartners.org.au) for information and updates on Mercy Partners and its ministries

ALL HALLOWS' SCHOOL

## Mercy in Action

Submitted by **Dr Lee-Anne Perry**

After a very well attended lunchtime information session on the School's Mercy Action Program, four hundred students signed on!

With such numbers, the challenge for us is how can we appropriately meet student interest and enthusiasm to be actively involved in working for social justice. In many of our students, we see a huge generosity of spirit and a willingness to be involved in service and awareness raising activities and it is my belief that

this has only been enhanced in recent years due to the students' understanding of Catherine McAuley's life and her work to improve through education and care for the sick, the lives of those living with great social disadvantage particularly women. In addition, Catherine's emphasis on kindness and a response of the heart is I feel what underpins student motivation to respond to situations of disadvantage and injustice. Our 2014 School Captains, Phoebe Peralta and Carla Pecoraro reflected on these qualities at the School Inaugural mass in the following way, "Catherine McAuley eloquently stated, 'If the love of God

really reigns in your heart, it will quickly show itself in the exterior'. As young women of Mercy, we must recognise that loving tenderly is not limited to thinking loving thoughts – it's about acting through love, and in turn taking the love we're given and sharing it with others. Acting justly means doing something when a person's rights are being disregarded, or when a person is being excluded or when dignity is being disrespected. The passion has to come from your heart and not from a place of egocentricity". The students seem to understand that with privilege comes the responsibility to give back and that issues of access to

MATER HEALTH SERVICES, BRISBANE

## Mater and The University of Queensland enter Alliance Agreement



Far-left: Anne Hetherington rsm, Mary Lawson rsm and Veronica Ekerick rsm. Left: Joanna Vasiliou, Angela Mary rsm and Bruce Wolfe

By **Veena Herron**

Mater and The University of Queensland (UQ) have a long-standing relationship, built on a foundation of mutual respect between the two organisations.

THIS RELATIONSHIP HAS been further strengthened by the announcement of an Alliance Agreement between both parties to create a unique and outstanding clinical teaching environment which allows students to experience the best of theory and practice in a tertiary teaching hospital.

Through the Alliance, the first of its kind within Australia, Mater and UQ have agreed to pursue the following objectives:

- > deliver high quality education in a supportive clinical environment
- > deliver superior outcomes for students

- > jointly pursue innovations and improvements to the way in which clinical teaching is delivered
- > give students the best possible experience and opportunity to learn and develop.

The agreement also extends to the restoration and refurbishment of Mater's Whitty Building – named for Mother Vincent Whitty – to create an education centre featuring world-class training facilities and a clinical school for medical, nursing and midwifery and allied health students.

The refurbishment will see the heritage-listed facility accommodate education and teaching spaces, administrative offices, student amenities and various business units.

It will also be given an external facelift to update its façade, while staying true to its heritage value. The main entry will be upgraded, a new annex constructed between two of the current wings and landscaping undertaken within the surrounding area.

The facility is scheduled to open in 2016, and is one way Mater is achieving its goal of safer, optimal patient outcomes through inter-professional education and practice.

In celebration of the Alliance Agreement between Mater and UQ, the signing of this formal agreement was officially recognised on Thursday 16 January 2014.

*Veena Herron is Mater Health Services Marketing and Communication Officer*

clean drinking water, shelter and food, education, health care and human rights must urgently be addressed. In all their endeavours to become more informed and to take what action they can for a better, fairer and more just world, there is an understanding that they receive far more than they give as they are gifted

with humility, kindness, gratitude, compassion and joy. Ultimately, they are gifted with hope because they begin to see that the power of one in a like-minded community really does make a difference.

*Dr Lee-Anne Perry is Principal of All Hallows' School*



PHOTOS: @ ALL HALLOWS' SCHOOL

MH&ACCQ

## Pathways to careers

Mercy Health and Aged Care Central Queensland has made efforts to develop medical and health industry career pathways in the Gladstone region by recently launching a program aimed at students at Chanel College. The program has an emphasis on completing structured work placements for a wide range of students. Peter Comerford, Executive Officer of Gladstone Mater Hospital noted the complexity of the health industry and the number of different career pathways that exist. He said, "For the Gladstone region, it's also about the portion of the population that are not involved in the resources sector and making sure they can see all the opportunities that are available to them". As part of the program the students will tour the Gladstone Mater Hospital, meet people working in different professions and take part in career activities. Chanel College students have responded enthusiastically to the program, saying it was "simply fantastic". Ms Leesa Jeffcoat, Director of Catholic Education in the region thanked

Mr Comerford, Sr Marie Duffy and their team for making this alliance a reality. She said, "I believe it will have many positive and tangible benefits for both MH&ACCQ and Catholic Education now and in the years ahead".



Celebrating at the launch of a partnership between Chanel College and MH&ACCQ. Back row: Kyra-Lee Sweeney, Deb Wright (Acting Director of Nursing, Gladstone Mater Hospital), Marie Duffy rsm, Peter Comerford (Executive Officer), Taryn McDermid. Front row: Dawson Frost and Lachlan Silver

PHOTO: COURTESY MH&ACCQ



## Sr Mary Wright ibvm to Speak in Brisbane

SR MARY WRIGHT ibvm, a Loreto sister, will be hosted by Mercy Partners to lead a discussion on the responsibilities of Stewards, Councillors and ministries of apostolic Public Juridic Persons on 5 April at Robertson Gardens, Kessels Road Sunnybank. Mary is a noted canon lawyer and she will engage us in an exploration of the canons which frame the governance responsibilities of Catholic Church entities. The workshop will begin at 9.30am and conclude with a light lunch around 2.30pm. You will find a flyer on our website, with registration details, or send us an email to [info@mercypartners.org.au](mailto:info@mercypartners.org.au).

## Expansion helps patients and their families



Peter Comerford

Mater Hospital Executive Officer Peter Comerford recently announced that upgrades to the Rockhampton Mater Misericordiae Hospital will include motel style accommodation to assist families required to travel to the region to support loved ones who are receiving medical treatment. The government funded improvements are part of a \$20 million expansion to the Mercy Health & Aged Care Group which covers the regions of Bundaberg, Mackay, Gladstone and Central Queensland.

MH&ACCQ

## Farewell to Elizabeth Lambert-Barker



Elizabeth with Berneice Loch rsm (left) and Anne Hetherington rsm (right)

With tears of joy and sadness, Elizabeth Lambert-Barker, Administration Manager for the Northern Community of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea farewelled friends and colleagues during a dinner held in her honour on 21 February 2014.

Guests, including representatives from the Northern Sisters of Mercy congregation, the Rockhampton Mater Hospital and Mercy Health & Aged Care Central Queensland, joined some of Elizabeth's closest family members to celebrate her 19 year career within the local health and aged care community and Sisters of Mercy Congregation.

Elizabeth, who has spent the majority of the last nineteen years supporting the Sisters of Mercy through a variety of administrative roles, began her association with the Mercy family working at the Mater Hospital, Rockhampton in 1994.

Since that time, she has gained not only the admiration and respect of her colleagues and associates, but has forged many valuable and enduring friendships along the way.

During the farewell dinner, Elizabeth thanked friends and colleagues for their guidance and friendship during her career. She also took time to make special mention of the Sisters of Mercy Congregation Leaders and the Ministry Leadership Team, who mentored and guided her for so many years.

Elizabeth told guests, "I am truly at a loss for words. All I can really think to say at the moment is Thank you, Thank You and Thank You. And yet those two little words sound so inadequate to express all the thoughts that are swirling around in my head and all the emotion that is bubbling away in my heart".

On behalf of Mercy Partners, and the Northern Mercy and Mater communities, we wish Elizabeth all the very best for the years ahead and thank her for her tireless commitment and dedication.



MHSNQ

## New Interns

by Linda Souter

Monday January 13 marked a medical milestone for the Mater, with the hospital welcoming its first intake of intern doctors.

The 10 new doctors have recently graduated from universities throughout Australia including one from James Cook University.

The Mater secured the 10 Intern places under the new Commonwealth Medical Internships (CMI) initiative.

The initiative is designed to increase the nation's capacity to train medical interns in the private sector in rural and regional Australia, where there are traditionally fewer options for internship training.

The internships give full-fee paying overseas students who have completed their medical course in Australia the opportunity to stay on to complete their required internship program.

Mater's Director of Medical Services Dr John Stokes said Australian students were guaranteed an internship when they finished their degree but in the past there had not been enough positions available for international students.

"A lot of talented young doctors have been forced to move back to their countries of origin after studying in Australia to secure an internship. We are thrilled to be able to keep some of them here now by offering internships," Dr Stokes said.

An Internship is a compulsory requirement for doctors after graduating from university to gain registration.

30-year-old Darren Hinton is from a small town of only 10,000 people in the province of British Columbia in Canada.

Dr Hinton, a graduate from Wollongong University, spent four years working as a forest fire fighter



MHS first group of intern doctors with Father Colin Reinhard. A special blessing and welcoming ceremony was held at the hospital on January 16.

for the Canadian government before deciding to come to Australia to study medicine.

He said he was interested in pursuing a medical career working in small communities and was looking forward to the unique opportunities his Internship at the Mater would bring.

Dr Hinton said he was also looking forward to experiencing a tropical lifestyle and working in the Outback at Mount Isa.

The Mater's interns are from Mauritius, Canada, the United States, Korea, Hong Kong and Malaysia.

The doctors will complete three core terms of medical, surgical and an accident and emergency rotation to Mount Isa as well as two elective terms.

"The intern program will be supported by 35 specialists at the Mater who offered free-of-charge training – and they are some of the best surgeons and physicians in the state and will be teaching the interns one-on-one," Dr Stokes said.

"The Mater was the first teaching hospital for JCU medical students and now becomes a complete centre

for medical education and a unique Private Teaching Hospital without comparison in Australia," Dr Stokes said.

The training will be facilitated by Neurosurgeon Dr Eric Guazzo as the Director of Clinical Training, Dr Jo Wong, Medical Education Officer and Dr Kerry Kelly, Deputy Director of Clinical Training.

*Linda is Mater Health Services North Queensland PR & Marketing Manager*

### NOTICE OF ERRATA

We would like to offer an apology to **Linda Souter** for incorrectly identifying her as Linda Herron in *Mercy Partners News* Issue 17, page 7.

ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE

# New classrooms for St Patrick's College Townsville gives the New Year a lift

The usual excitement and anticipation of beginning a new school year were super-charged for the staff and students at St Patrick's College Townsville when they arrived to find the school's new three-storey building open and ready for classes.

**THE NEW STRUCTURE** features 11 classrooms and specialist computer, business and art rooms, together with a separate "wet space" and kiln room for pottery projects.

The elevated classrooms allow students magnificent views of Cleveland Bay and Magnetic Island together with refreshing sea breezes as they move along the wide verandahs.

In addition to this impressive new structure, refurbishments of existing class spaces have provided the additional benefits of a Music Centre, which includes a spacious classroom, several practice spaces and instrumental storage areas. The high ceilings produce a beautiful resonance which makes choir practice an exciting and fulfilling experience for the ever-increasing group of student enthusiasts.

Other important additions to the College facilities include a Learning Enrichment room, which supports ESL students and those whose learning has suffered gaps prior to their arrival at St Patrick's. Additional student support is provided on a daily basis in the newly-established "Blue Room", in which the Pastoral Co-ordinators and College counsellors make Pastoral care available to all students.

College Principal, Ms Marcia Chock Man, said, "The long-awaited improvements to our College campus heralds a new era in learning and comfort for our students, and provides greater opportunities for our highly-skilled staff to apply creative teaching techniques and use our technology to greatest advantage".

The College community will enjoy a short respite from building and renovating until mid-year when work will commence on a new two-storey, six-classroom building adjacent to the sports court. As well, further renovations will provide additional dormitory facilities in preparation for the Year 7 residential students arriving in 2015, the relocation of the gymnasium and the establishment of a centrally located and landscaped "piazza" for all to enjoy.



Above: The impressive face of the new building. Below: The new building features wide, spacious verandahs.





St Ursula's College, Yeppoon



St Rita's College, Clayfield

## Transfer of ministries

ON 27 MAY 2014, the Presentation Sisters of Queensland will transfer canonical responsibility for St Rita's College, Clayfield to Mercy Partners, and then on 12 June, they will transfer canonical responsibility for St Ursula's College, Yeppoon. These two colleges were founded by the Presentation Sisters in 1926 and 1917 respectively, and each carries a proud tradition

of excellence in educating young women.

This transfer from the Presentation Sisters will be an historic occasion for both the Presentation Sisters and Mercy Partners. It is a great expression of trust on behalf of the Congregation and a great responsibility for Mercy Partners.

The Council of Mercy Partners will commit to assisting the two colleges to maintain and extend the Presentation Charism, supporting the boards of the Colleges in their endeavours and ensuring that the ministries remain entities of the Catholic Church.

In our next edition of the newsletter, we will report on the transfer rituals.

## Mary Reynolds rsm visits Queensland

ON 17 MARCH, St Patrick's Day, Mercy Partners hosted Sr Mary Reynolds rsm, Director of Mercy International, at the Mater Private Conference Room. She spoke to us of the legacy of Catherine McAuley and her hopes for the future of the Mercy Charism across the 47 countries where Mercy ministries operate to relieve suffering,

educate and advocate for the poor in the face of injustice. She was an inspiring speaker, filled with hope for the future. This was the last of the Queensland presentations by Mary, who will now fly south to meet with Sisters and ministry workers before heading to the Phillipines to spend time with the Sisters who are

working in Tacloban. She told us that Mercy International Association (MIA) had contributed \$1,500,000 to the recovery effort, sourced from Mercy ministries around the world.



Mary Reynolds rsm in Rockhampton with, from left: Fr John Grace (Diocesan Administrator), Leesa Jeffcoat (Board Chair, MH&ACCQ) and Ian Mill (CEO, MH&ACCQ)



In Brisbane, Monday March 17: Mary Reynolds rsm responds after being presented with a gift by Isla Davies, Chair of All Hallows' School Limited

# WHO IS YOUR GOD?



CARMEL DWAN RSM SAYS,  
 “I invite you to take a few moments out in the lead up to Easter and reflect on the following selection which is taken from *The Gospel of Luke* by Geoffrey Robinson”.

Our value for this year is that of **respect** and as I pondered on the following article offered for your reflection and personal growth this Lent I began by reflecting on my own respect for the name of God because so often we hear the word ‘God’ used in exclamations, moments of surprise, “O my God!”.

**MAYBE THIS COULD** be one challenge for us this Lent to be aware of our own language and respect for the word God and also to raise the awareness of others. Bishop Robinson in his reflections on the Gospel of Luke ‘Extravagant joy on finding the lost’: (15:1-10) writes that the Pharisees simply did not share the idea of Jesus of, a God madly in love with all sinners and going out to meet them rather than merely sitting back and waiting for the sinners to do all the work.

He continues on, challenging us to reflect on our own understanding of God.

“If the word ‘God’ is used in the media, it is probable that the most common idea raised in the minds of readers/viewers in Australia will be that of an elderly white male sitting on a throne. And yet, just to start with, God is neither elderly nor white

nor male. Against this, Jesus presented a God so driven by extravagant love that moderation and even prudence were put aside.

There is only one God, but an endless variety of human understandings of God. Unable to grasp the infinite God, we constantly create a lesser god in our minds and worship that god, a god who is a very large human being rather than the true God. In a particular way, we all have profound fears within us, and these fears can lead us to false ideas of a constantly angry God. Human ideas of God will always be infinitely inadequate but some can at least assist rather than hinder our growth. To promote growth, we must move:

- > From a god about whom we use many words to a stunned awareness of an ‘otherness’ beyond the reach of either imagination or language
- > From a god who is contained within a book or the teachings of a human authority to a god who cannot be contained by any created thing
- > From a god religious authorities can possess, package and dispense to others to a god of infinite surprise
- > From limited human ideas (e.g. an elderly white male ruler) to a god who is above all limitations

- > From an attitude that we will believe only in a god who agrees with us on all major matters to an attitude of profound humility before our own ignorance
- > From a god greatly concerned with glory and majesty to a god not standing on dignity and not threatened by anything human beings can do, but caring passionately what we do to each other, to ourselves, and to the community
- > From a god whose glory is to be found in our obedience to a god whose glory is to be found in our growth
- > From an angry god, not to a god of soft love, but to a god who, out of love, wants our growth and, like a good parent or teacher, is not afraid to challenge us to grow
- > From a religion in which beliefs, moral rules, worship and membership of an institution or human community hold first place to a religion in which a love relationship with God holds first place
- > From a commercial relationship with a god whose rewards can be earned by doing right things to a love relationship with a god who is pure gift
- > From a relationship in which we are firmly in charge and determine exactly what part God shall be allowed in our lives to a love relationship of total giving
- > From a god who demands that we bridge the gap between us to a god who, with a love that can be quite immoderate and imprudent, always seeks for us.”

May this Lent be a time of special grace for each of us.

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