



2012 FRAYNE SPEECH FESTIVAL Hosted by St Joseph's College, Mildura



Debating Winners – Sacred Heart College Kyneton

Debating runners up – St Joseph's College, Mildura

Since 1996, students from the Victorian schools established by the Sisters of Mercy have competed in an annual speech festival named in honour of Mother Ursula Frayne. Ursula Frayne was trained by Catherine McAuley in Dublin, Ireland and became a professed Sister of Mercy on 25 January 1837. She led a group of Sisters of Mercy to Australia and on 2 February 1846 opened the first Mercy school in Australia at Victoria Square, Perth (now Mercedes College). Some eleven years later, Ursula Frayne travelled further east and in 1857 established the Academy of Mary Immaculate in Fitzroy as the first girls' secondary school in Victoria. For the first time in the history of the festival, representatives from Victoria and Western Australia attended the event and witnessed the spirited competition and the warm hospitality offered by St Joseph's College, Mildura.

A number of articles have appeared in College newsletters since the Festival and extracts included below capture the enjoyment experience by hosts and visitors alike. We offer our appreciation to SJC Principal, Darren Atkinson, the staff and students, Festival Coordinator, Jenny Gilbert and her committee and of course, all the students and staff who prepared and participated so well to make the festival such an outstanding success. ►

DEBATING

1st place:	Sacred Heart College, Kyneton
2nd place:	St Joseph's College, Mildura
Best Overall Speaker: Elisa Bolzonello	Our Lady of Mercy College, Heidelberg

VOICE CHOIR

1st place:	Catholic College Bendigo
2nd place:	Mount Lilydale Mercy College, Lilydale

PUBLIC SPEAKING

1st place: Kate Bogacki	Sacred Heart College, Geelong
2nd place: Stephanie Dickson	Our Lady Of Mercy College, Heidelberg



Public Speaking winner, Kate Bogacki and runner up, Stephanie Dickson



Voice Choir winners – Catholic College Bendigo



Voice Choir runners up – Mount Lilydale Mercy College



EDITORIAL

Welcome to the second edition of the Mercy Ed newsletter for 2012. While it is customary to wait for a feature on the annual Frayne Speech Festival in this second edition, I apologise for the lateness of release of this edition but trust that you enjoy reading it just the same.

The 17th annual Frayne Speech Festival was held for the first time at St Joseph's College, Mildura. It was indeed a magnificent celebration and one that was enjoyed by host and guest alike. The day commenced with a spiritual celebration of the local community, ably led by Dr Tony Finn, Director of Religious Education, recognising the contribution of the indigenous people years earlier. The warmth of hospitality was clearly evident and the generosity of the College staff and students in catering for the evening meal, breakfast the next morning and home made morning teas was quite extraordinary.

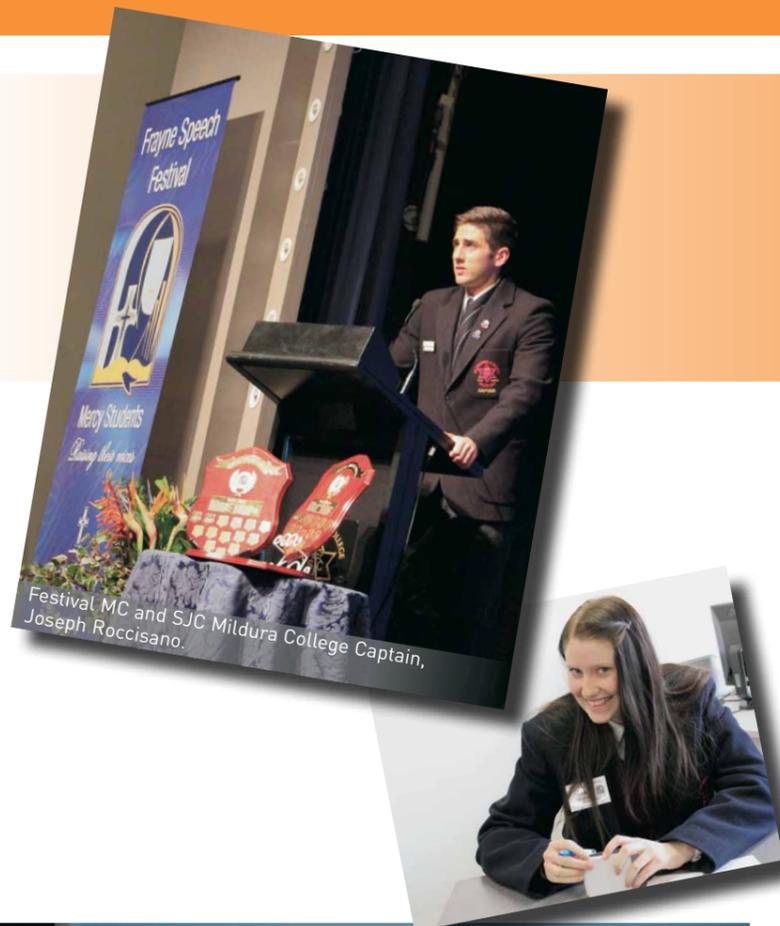
David Finch commenced his role as Deputy Principal – Director of Mission at Mount Lilydale Mercy College at the start of this year. An introductory article was featured in the first edition of the Mercy Ed this year but unfortunately the content of the article contained a feature on one of his colleagues at the College, Mike Haywood. I once again sincerely apologise to David for my error and hope that the correct article featured in this edition will provide you with an insight into David's role and his background in Catholic Education.

Earlier this year Sr Marilyn Lacey rsm, a Sister of Mercy from San Francisco, graced us with her wonderful presence, speaking with students and staff across Mercy Education. Sr Mary Moloney, Principal of the Academy of Mary Immaculate, and her formidable Planning Committee, arranged a jam-packed week of events and inspirational encounters with Sr Marilyn. I sincerely thank Michael Loughnane for his beautiful article capturing the spirit of Sr Marilyn's work during her address to 450 staff at OLMC Heidelberg earlier this year.

Finally we congratulate the community of St Aloysius College, North Melbourne on the joys and celebrations that marked the 125th anniversary of the College this year.

God bless.

Eugene Lynch
Editor



Festival MC and SJC Mildura College Captain, Joseph Rocciano.

"This event would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the organising committee and those who gave their time and energy on the day. A spirit of Community, Hospitality and Service prevailed. Many visiting students and teachers reported that this was one of the best Frayne Festivals they had attended. With many thanks to all involved. We hope that St Joseph's College Mildura will be remembered fondly by our guests and that we may host the festival again in the future."
– Jenny Gilbert, Festival Coordinator

2012 FRAYNE SPEECH FESTIVAL



"Whilst, ostensibly a competition in debating, public speaking and voice choir, it is in reality one of the few opportunities when representatives from all the Colleges within Mercy Education can meet together. It is therefore, a time of great unity under the Mercy banner and gives us pause to think about what that means."
– Kevin Towns, Deputy Principal, SJC Mildura



"The twelve competing schools were welcomed with a BBQ dinner on Thursday evening, then a breakfast of freshly cooked pancakes before our debating and public speaking heats."
– Merylyn Hoysted, Sacred Heart College, Kyneton

In her week in Australia, Sr Marilyn has visited and spoken at four Mercy schools, a Young Mercy Links evening, the 2011 Mercy Youth Pilgrimage Dublin reunion meeting, Staff Mercy formation day attended by over 450 staff, and finally on Wednesday, at a gathering of over two hundred students from a number of Mercy schools. We are blessed to have hosted Sr Marilyn and many have been moved and inspired by what they heard.

SR MARILYN PLAYS 'LIVING MUSIC' FOR HER HOSTS

"All spirituality is about learning to wake up..."

This was a very special day for all those involved in Mercy education who met together at Our Lady of Mercy College, Heidelberg in late March. It would be a hardened heart that would not have come away from the day feeling inspired and invigorated: not only that, but also proud to be associated with Mercy education. We were all treated to an inspiring talk delivered with a beguiling mix of humour, compassion and insight; a talk that challenged us to find "a wealth of blessings" in the most unexpected people and places.

Clearly Sr Marilyn likes the Persian poet Rumi. She began with one of his poems:

*For sixty years I have been forgetful
Every minute, but not for a second
Has this flowing toward me stopped or slowed.
I deserve nothing. Today I recognize
That I am the guest the mystics talk about.
I play this living music for my Host.
Everything today is for the Host.*

From "The Music" by Rumi

Not for a minute did this flowing towards us stop while she spoke to us. From the moment she opened her lips her audience was captivated. This brief summary does not do justice to the 'living' quality of her talk but it does communicate some of the key ideas she shared with us on March 26.

Sr. Marilyn believes that all her 'life's learnings' could be summarised in three key perspectives: these are, she suggests, the three "Life-stances" that we need to adopt in order to draw close to God.

LIFE STANCE 1: "BE ATTENTIVE!"

"Our merciful God", she warned us, "is always appearing, but usually in disguise". As the Rumi poem (above) suggests, grace is flowing towards us all the time. To illustrate the 'hidden' quality of this grace she told us a series of stories. The most vivid story she related was about a delegation of Bedouins who were taken to France by the writer Antoine de Saint Exupéry as a reward for saving his life in the desert. When he showed them Paris they were unimpressed. But when he took them to see a massive waterfall in the Alps they were transfixed. After a long time viewing this wondrous sight their host hinted that it was time to go, but the Bedouin leader turned to him and said, "We can't leave this water until it stops". They had come from the desert, a place where water was a rare and precious commodity, when they saw the waterfall they could not comprehend such extravagance. If only we had an awareness of the extravagance that surrounds us every waking moment of our day!

She quoted Emerson, who urged us to reflect on this 'what if' scenario: "What if the stars that come out every night, only came out once every thousand years? What would we do if we were alive on that one night?" – As Sr Marilyn reminded us, "the stars come out every night; but we just watch television!" God, she warned us, "never waits for us to 'ready'; if we are not paying attention so we miss God's arrival in our lives." The good news is, if we are awake we always get even more than what we ask for – but not in a way that we expect; God always surprises us. "No one", she reminded us, "recognised the Risen Christ". We have to 'attune' ourselves – we 'wake up' through contemplation and by crossing borders". Ultimately, "all spirituality is about *learning to wake up...*".



Keynote speakers, Sr Mary Duffy rsm and Sr Marilyn Lacey rsm with Coordinator Sr Mary Moloney rsm (centre)

LIFE STANCE 2: "THROUGH EXPECTING TO MEET GOD-IN-DISGUISE, WE BECOME MORE WELCOMING"

"Every human heart craves welcome", says Sr Marilyn simply; and when do people most need welcome? – "When they are not valued ... when they have suffered great loss, are vulnerable, displaced, uprooted from all that is familiar and supportive". This is the true call of every Christian, as far as Sr Marilyn is concerned – to welcome the stranger and give them a home. Marilyn attests to the fact that refugees have taught her a whole new way of loving and the truth of the witness of Hebrews is always at the forefront of her mind: "remember to welcome strangers for people have welcomed angels without even knowing" (Paul's Letter to the Hebrews).

Marilyn's great power is to interpret the signs of God in our world. With simplicity and humility she put forward a forceful argument for a picture of God "who calls all of us to move out to embrace the most marginalised in our world; this is not a heavy duty, but is the road to joy".

LIFE STANCE 3: "GREAT JOY AWAITS US WHEN WE WELCOME GOD IN STRANGERS..."

Latin word for tent is "tabernaculum". If only we could make a tent for every human being we encounter. "If we had a little white tent that was open, instead of a little closed gold box", Marilyn comments wryly.

*"I hear a knock at my door.
Who else could it be?
So I rush without brushing my hair!"* (Hafiz)

"God is always trying to get our attention ... God always comes as a stranger not as your best friend." This is a way of being that contrasts with our conventional way of seeing. But "all the

great saints", Marilyn reminded us, "lived their mysticism in the repudiation of the values that ruled their time and context". Once we truly experience ourselves as 'God's guest', we will wish that on others. If we could make this real "tribes and cliques would give way to inclusion; migrants other strangers would be welcome; and destruction of earth would be unthinkable."

"To know God", Emmanuel Levinas teaches, "means to know what has to be done." When we are in a deep and mutual relationship with God, we know what must be done – we must extend hospitality to strangers near and far.

Marilyn did what had to be done by setting up an organisation that specifically targets help to young women in the very poorest parts of our world: in Sudan and Haiti. **Mercy Beyond Borders** set up educational opportunities for young women so that they can break out of the cycle of poverty and violence. What we 'must do' is help this organisation flourish and grow. Many of those present purchased Marilyn's powerful autobiography: "This Flowing Toward Me: A story of God arriving in Strangers". In the forward Sr Helen Prejean csj comments perceptively that Sr Marilyn's story "has the ring of authenticity to it" and communicates powerfully the Biblical truth that "God is close to the broken-hearted" and that "life is about compassion, not perfection."

But what made Sr Marilyn so attractive to her large audience was the palpable joy that she embodied in her being. In the words of Sr Prejean, she is clearly a woman who is "filled with unmistakable joy even in the midst of suffering." May her ministry grow, prosper and flourish through God's grace – and *our support!*

DR MICHAEL LOUGHNANE
ACTING DIRECTOR OF RE AND
FAITH FORMATION

St Aloysius College, North Melbourne.



A captive audience at OLMC Heidelberg



Sr Marilyn engaging her audience with her stories and her humour



Staff interacting in discussion groups



Focussing again on Sr Marilyn

BREAKING OPEN THE HEART OF MERCY



Sacred Heart College, Geelong

The first Seeds of Justice Student Conference for 2012 was held on 24 & 25 May with the theme Breaking Open the Heart of Mercy. As with any conference, the two days were well planned and organised, making the most of every moment. This conference had two Keynote Speakers, one each day and had a placement component which made it extra interesting and more interactive. After the registration and welcome, the first Keynote Speaker was Sr Giovanna Danza rsm. She spoke about Breaking Open the Heart of Mercy in the prison ministry. This was an amazing and insightful session.

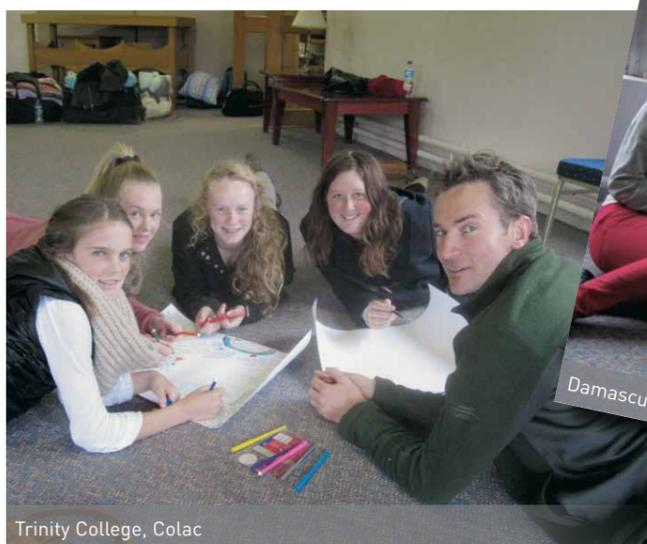
The rest of Thursday revolved around our placements; we received our placements, given our brief, put into our groups and then taken to our placements. These were quite varied and included McAuley House, Fr Bob Magurie's Soup Van, Exodus Community and Aged care facilities, namely: Bailey House, North Melbourne and Mercy Place Parkville and East Melbourne. At the Aged Care facilities we visited and interacted with people in the High Care Unit and the Dementia Unit.

I found this to be so rewarding as it was very different to what I have ever experienced. I learned so much. This part of the community is so hidden from what I usually see, and their needs are so high. After our placements we headed back to the Retreat Centre, shared our experiences and retired to bed after a long day.

On the second day the Keynote Speaker was Mr Allan Ansell, a teacher for SHC Geelong. He spoke about Breaking Open the Heart of Mercy in Papua New Guinea and how Sacred Heart College Geelong has strengthened its connection with the Sisters of Mercy on a trip to Papua New Guinea. Once again this was very interesting and just amazed me by the number of different ways we can help. I was really impressed with



Mercy Regional College, Camperdown



Trinity College, Colac



Damascus College, Ballarat

the Geelong students and it made me think more deeply about what we could do at our school. Time was then given to school group discussion, questions and answers, feedback and preparations to leave.

I cannot find enough words to fully describe my experience of this conference. The entire conference was enlightening and rewarding, but these words don't seem to do it justice. I would highly recommend it to anyone offered this opportunity. Once again, many thanks for the chance to attend this conference and represent our school.

**TIARNA MAYMAN 10A
SHC KYNETON**



Mount Lilydale Mercy College, Lilydale



Our Lady of Mercy College, Heidelberg



**Mount Lilydale
Mercy College**

**DAVID FINCH
– DEPUTY
PRINCIPAL
– DIRECTOR
OF MISSION**

My wife Jan and I moved to Victoria in January this year, both of us optimistic about our new challenges ahead. My appointment at Mount Lilydale Mercy College gives me the opportunity to continue to work in the area of Social Justice, Outreach and Mission, which have always been great passions of mine. This is the first time I have worked in a Mercy school, with previous experience in Marist and Christian Brothers Colleges. However, my passion to work in school leadership in the fields of Religious Education and Social Justice stems from personal inspiration from two long term and close friends, Sister Marie Ralph rsm and Sister Pat Phillips rsm. Sister Marie, in particular a long term colleague at Sacred Heart College Middle School in Adelaide encouraged me to share my deep faith and passion from my early years at the school and share this with students and staff.

I have been teaching for almost 24 years, 17 of those in Catholic Education and 7 in an Anglican College. My involvement in leadership positions was initially in student welfare and behaviour management.

However, with the encouragement of Sister Marie Ralph, the opportunity arose at Sacred Heart College to take on the role of Director of Mission.

With previous experience as Deputy Principal at St Joseph's College in Katherine, where I had the responsibility of promotion of the college ethos and faith development with staff and students, consequently providing me the skills to undertake this added important role of mission, social justice and outreach.

After my time at Sacred Heart College in Adelaide, my family and I moved to Queensland to take on the role of Assistant Principal – Mission at St Brendan's College, a Christian Brothers school in Yeppoon. It was at St Brendan's where I experienced a significant highlight in my career, with the establishment of our very own food van, to assist with the homeless and disadvantaged in our local community. This provided a hands on approach and an opportunity for our students to become actively involved in making a real difference to the lives of others. After a few years we returned to Adelaide, (to care for my elderly father) where I had roles as Assistant Principal and Deputy Principal in various disciplines at Gleeson College. It was at Gleeson College, where I established a number of programs aimed at developing student involvement in Mission and Social Justice.

Last year, I saw an opportunity to work in Melbourne at Mount Lilydale Mercy College – to be actively involved in the works of Mercy and the charisma of Catherine McAuley. I am excited to accept this significant leadership role at a College with a magnificent tradition of Mercy works, social justice and outreach programs. Catherine McAuley was an outstanding role model of faith in action and I am looking forward to promoting her legacy with the students and staff at Mount Lilydale Mercy College.



2012 Student Leadership Team Members, Madison Masuino (House Cup Captain); Caitlin Duggan (Sports Captain) and Chloe Karras (Performing Arts Captain) at St Patrick's Cathedral at the 125th Anniversary Mass.

ST ALOYSIUS COLLEGE 125TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS – SUNDAY APRIL 29

Sunday was a very moving and joyful occasion, one that made me very proud to be the Principal of this wonderful College.

The celebrations began with a prayerful and beautiful Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral. There was only standing room left as the procession began. Various symbols were brought up in the procession to highlight our history; the school bell, the Mercy Cross, the old and new school banners, uniforms – current and past and these symbols helped to focus our attention and evoke memories and thoughts that over the last 125 years we have constantly met the challenge as students and staff to “Strive for Higher Things”.

Our celebration of Mass was enhanced by the beautiful singing of the College Choir who was joined by staff, ex-students and past staff. A special thank you to Mrs Rina Prinzi for all her work in preparing the Choir and Cantors, to Ms January Ma and the other staff for their assistance.

After Mass, all were invited back to the College for afternoon tea and a number of student performances. It seemed that nearly everyone who attended the Mass returned to the College as each of the areas set up were full to overflowing. The student performances demonstrated the talents of some current and past students. The 125 Year Anniversary CD was launched called “Celebrate the Music”. It is a mixture of instrumental and vocal arrangements of students (past and present) who have shared their talents with the College. Copies are available from the College Office, \$20 each and all profits will go to the Catherine McAuley Fund – a fund which is used to support students and families in need.

Many people helped to make the occasion an outstanding success and the contribution and work of the staff, supported by many students must be acknowledged. It was a great team effort.

JOHN DAVIDSON
PRINCIPAL

