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MERCY

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Ed

2013 MERCY ETHOS PROGRAM DUBLIN, IRELAND

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EDITORIAL

This edition of the Mercy Ed newsletter has the theme of *journey* permeating through it. Our pilgrims who participated in the two Mercy Ethos programs in Dublin came from various parts of the globe and centred themselves and their thoughts in Catherine's founding house at Baggot Street. I am grateful to Sr Annette Schneider rsm, joint coordinator of the program, and the other eight participants who share their inner thoughts and experience on a journey that took them to the heart of mercy.

While not the same length of journey, Principals and Board Directors from Victoria travelled to Western Australia in May this year. Hosted by Santa Maria College, Attadale and St Brigid's College, Lesmurdie our Western Australian colleagues extended warm hospitality and offered engaging sessions during the two day Principals' meeting. Similarly our recent journey to Aotearoa New Zealand for the 11th biennial AMSSA Conference was a wonderful experience of the wider Mercy family coming together to share stories, ideas and practices on Mercy Education.

While not featured in this edition, currently students from our Mercy colleges are journeying across the seas to Dublin and Rome undertaking a *Pilgrimage for Young Mercy Leaders*. We look forward to hearing of their journey in our next edition.

Finally, the first Seeds of Justice event for 2013 saw our students venture out of their comfort zone and journey to various placements across Melbourne, searching for a greater awareness and understanding of "Who is Mercy". Sr Kath Tierney rsm, as the first keynote speaker for this event set the scene beautifully. She spoke about the founding story of Catherine McAuley, the essence of mercy being with the poor and most marginalised and how Catherine's gift to us all is to inspire us to follow in her footsteps:

May Catherine's original vision and the spirit of our Mercy pioneers inspire us today, not to do what they did then, but to be where they would be if they were here now, standing in our shoes.

God bless

Eugene Lynch
Editor

REFLECTIONS ON THE MERCY ETHOS PROGRAMS



SR ANNETTE SCHNEIDER RSM

Institute Councillor

From 2005 till 2013 I have had the privilege of being involved in eight Mercy Ethos programmes at Mercy International Centre in Dublin. During that time, approximately 200 participants have shared the journey and helped bring the inspirational story of Catherine McAuley to life for me in a myriad of ways. While the core objectives have not changed, new insights from programme facilitators (Madeline Duckett rsm, Deb Kent and Carmel Crawford), from the team at MIC, from our local Irish presenters and from participants' feedback have been incorporated along the way, culminating in what we experienced in April 2013. This development and enrichment will continue as the feedback from the most recent programmes informs the planning for 2014.

I began my involvement at age 52, (the same age as Catherine when she was setting out on her particular 'path of mercy') and I finish it now a much richer person because of the people of mercy I have met along the way. I have always valued the presence of other Mercy sisters on each programme as it is a significant experience for each of us, being in the place where Catherine shaped her response to the Gospel call to be compassionate, merciful and just. I value the friendship and ministry support of the Mercy leaders I meet when I visit our ministries as part of my new role – many of whom I met for the first time as part of our preparations for Dublin many years ago! I have no doubt that this programme is a significant means of personal and professional learning, one which ISMAPNG was very pleased to continue to co-sponsor, building on the foundation of the former Melbourne Congregation and Mercy Education Ltd. Our challenge is to enable our growth as Mercy leaders to continue as a result of our participation. The network of participants now extends across Australia, Papua New Guinea, Aotearoa New Zealand and Newfoundland. To borrow from Ursula Frayne and apply it to this ministry of leadership formation: 'we go on with a sense of God's call and pray for the strength to keep focused on the journey.'



DR MICHAEL LOUGHNANE

St Aloysius College, North Melbourne

Pilgrimage is very evocative for me. I suppose it is because I have always been a traveller. I was sent away to pre-seminary boarding school when I was 11, and that was the beginning of my travels away from my birthplace in Clare in the west of Ireland. I feel I have been 'on the road' ever since. Of course pilgrimage is the definitive metaphor for the Christian life, so well summed up by Augustine, when he observed that we have here on earth no lasting city – and that our hearts are restless until they rest in the City of God at the end of the journey.

As part of my own life pilgrimage I spent two years testing a vocation in the Jesuits in Ireland; and within that journey I undertook a five week pilgrimage to France in 1985. Two of us set out on a month long journey that took us from Lyon to the birthplace of Pierre Favre (the first ordained priest in the Jesuits), a little village called Villaret in Haute Savoie, and ended our journey in Taizé. We didn't bring a tent, and lived on \$2 a day, and walked every step of the way. It was a truly revelatory experience for me – I encountered first-hand the generosity of ordinary people along the road. We begged for accommodation every night, and most nights people gave us a place to stay as well as food. This experience of dependency and vulnerability made me understand that hospitality is probably the greatest gift one can ever give to another human being.

I mention all this because it was against the backdrop of this rich memory that I travelled to Dublin on the Mercy Pilgrimage in April this year. It is said that "to be a pilgrim is to make a journey in the light of a story", and of course this refers to original story (the Gospel), and to the story of the visionary founder – in our case

In 2001, the inaugural Mercy Ethos Program jointly conducted by the former Melbourne Congregation of Sisters of Mercy and Mercy Secondary Education Inc (MSEI) was held at Catherine McAuley's founding house of Mercy at Baggot Street, Dublin, Ireland. Since that time, many programs have followed and in 2013 the ninth and tenth programs were conducted and led by coordinators, Carmel Crawford and Sr Annette Schneider rsm. While a journey for all 'pilgrims' of the program, it has indeed been a special journey for Annette who has played a pivotal role in eight of the ten programs.

Annette concludes her involvement in the program and we thank her for her outstanding contribution over many years. She leads the reflections offered in this edition and joins with a number of participants who share with us their inner thoughts on this special journey to the heart of Mercy.

Catherine McAuley; but the most profound story that is revealed to us through pilgrimage is our own story.

About 30 of us from a variety of Mercy institutions enjoyed the warm hospitality of Mercy International in Baggot Street where we explored and meditated on the life and work of Catherine McAuley and the early Sisters of Mercy. It certainly was a journey worth making and is a story that is worth knowing. Looking back I see the week as a kind of spiral, where we progressively delved deeper and deeper into Catherine's life at each stop along the road. By the end of the week I felt that this story was now my story, it resonated so deeply with my own dreams and desires.

It is, of course, impossible to communicate in words the power of a special experience; suffice it to say that the quality of the speakers was so high, the planning of the week so meticulous and wise, and the company so good that it would be impossible to come away from the experience without being touched in some way. We learned about Catherine's life-story – her trials, her devotion to the poor and destitute of Dublin, her intelligent analysis of the signs of the times, her wise leadership, her humanity and her human failings. But most of all what shone through for me – and was a recurring theme throughout the entire week – was Catherine's absolute faith in the graciousness and providence of God. The spiritual teacher, Richard Rohr OFM, says "we do not think ourselves into new ways of living, we live our way into new ways of thinking". How true this was of Catherine McAuley. By living the gospel in the most practical and down-to-earth way, she grew into a new and revolutionary way of understanding the Gospel; a way that was so compelling and attractive that large numbers of women wanted – and still want – to follow her throughout the world. Not only women of course, but large numbers of men (such as myself) are also attracted to her practical, down-to-earth brand of spirituality.

This intensive immersion in the life and vision of Catherine McAuley is an experience I will not soon forget, as I travel (ever closer!) to that Eternal City, where Catherine might give a meal and a place to rest, and a nice cup of tea when I arrive.



LINDA MELLORS

Mercy Health, Melbourne

I feel very fortunate to have been a pilgrim on the 2013 Mercy Ethos Program. The front of our journals for the trip says "Catherine's Story, Our Story" and this was an apt descriptor of the entire program. We began by meeting most of the other pilgrims in Melbourne and corresponded with our Canadian colleagues. There was much excitement about our pending trip and what we might discover.

The welcome we received in Dublin was incredibly warm and displayed the wonderful hospitality of the Mercy order. We are all indebted to Sr Mary Reynolds rsm and her team for taking such good care of us at the Mercy International Centre and welcoming us to the broader Mercy family. We learnt about Catherine's life, taking in tours of the streets of Dublin, Coolock House and the house on Baggot Street (now the Mercy International Centre). We were also treated to a trip to Glendalough on an ethereal, misty day.

Our expanded knowledge of Catherine, the early sisters and the work of the current Mercy sisters and partners will spur us on in our various Mercy ministries. It was enlightening to discover that Mercy is involved not just in education, health, welfare and spirituality but also in environmental causes, employment pathways and in global justice issues through the United Nations.

I learnt much valuable information about Catherine, her great strengths and her leadership attributes. I particularly liked that her leadership challenges were discussed throughout the program. We were given an insight into the very human Catherine.

My own time at Mercy has been filled with positive and empowering messages about lay people continuing the mission of Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy. This pilgrimage emphasised the changing face of Mercy and the great privilege and responsibility we have to continue this important work. I left Dublin wondering what Catherine could have achieved with today's knowledge and resources. Her achievements are already remarkable and it is gratifying to see the global nature of the Mercy works and the large numbers of laypeople who want to work in Mercy organisations and continue the Mission.

I would like to particularly thank Sr Annette Schneider rsm and Carmel Crawford. Their thoughtful planning ensured that we had the best possible experience.



SR ANILA ISSAC RSM

ISM PNG

Who doesn't like listening to a good story? Carol Wheeler rsm fittingly says in *Catherine: A Reflection on Values from the Mercy Tradition* "...time to return to our founding stories – for we learn who we are, indeed, we continue to create who we are by the stories we tell." Story telling has a great significance in my life; it was the story of the *Walking Nuns* and their response to the marginalized which inspired me to join the religious life as a Sister of Mercy.

The story of Mercy is an unfolding and enduring story about people, throughout history and in present time, people who value the dignity of each person and promote compassion and justice. The theme of the Mercy Ethos Program 2013 – Catherine's Story our Story was an appropriate theme for me for I had the chance to revisit Catherine's story and the founding stories in the HOUSE and the place where it all began. What a privilege it had been – I had to keep on reminding myself – this is where it began and I am leaving my footprints in the same place. In listening to the stories about the founding sisters and of the new foundations through which our ministries are influenced and connected, encouraged me to continue to appreciate the courage, persistence and foresight of these founding women. These stories became alive as we entered the Mercy House where it all began and from where the Mercy Ministries were taken to new lands.

We received a very warm welcome by the MIC team and community, keeping the tradition of Mercy Way of Living. Catherine would have been proud of her sisters. The tour of Coolock House was fantastic; it was like stepping into the time capsule which took us to the 19th century to appreciate a broader view of Dublin in Catherine's time: the political, religious and social milieu of the time. The next day we had a walking tour of Dublin and of the places Catherine and her sisters would have walked. The highlight of the tour was the visit to the St Teresa's church in Clarendon Street, and to pray at the crypt of the first 13 Sisters of Mercy buried there.

The following day we went exploring the spirit and thin places, the beautiful and enriching experience of visiting Glendalough. I was amazed at listening to stories of Saint Kevin praying standing still in the lake and the blackbird making a nest on his palm, and of him saving the people from the monster that lived in the lake. We blessed ourselves and our friends with the water from the lake. The misty weather enhanced the mysticism of the place. The next day was to look at Catherine's approach to leadership. We looked at a very human Catherine, who struggled with day to day dealings of leadership without losing sight of her vision. We looked at the contemporary challenges for Mercy leadership and what does it mean to live Mercy today, its challenges, values and direction. We also looked at Mercy in Global Context, Mercy in Action where our contemporary story adds to the richness and complexity as we understand what it means to offer Mercy and hospitality to those we encounter.

During our time together as a group we were aware that many of us who work in Mercy ministries today are called to share the legacy of Catherine McAuley and the early sisters. Catherine's Story, my story, our collective stories, being men and women of Mercy, provided us opportunity to explore the founding stories and to reflect on how we are called to play our part in leading our communities and work places to become authentic expressions of Mercy in the contemporary world.

I give thanks to God and to all who made it possible for us and for me to have such an enriching experience.



ALISON POWER

St. Patrick's Mercy Home, St John's, NL, Canada

I was thrilled to be invited to share in the journey of learning more about Catherine McAuley, our Catherine. I am so amazed by the sense of welcome which I received and the warmth and friendship that developed during our time together. It is amazing to learn of Catherine's challenges and to see her degree of perseverance. Imagine her mission being alive so many years later. She has affected more lives than I am sure she ever thought possible.

In today's work, we face challenges that we may perceive as being far more complicated than Catherine would have experienced, but we are very fortunate to have friends and support systems internationally. I was able to draw on experiences and support among our group in Dublin that will remain with me for an eternity. Catherine should be very proud of what she accomplished and I am so very proud to be one "little pebble on her beach" as we move Catherine's mission forward for many more generations to come.

Catherine's example shows us that faith and clarity of purpose can allow us to achieve what might otherwise seem overwhelming.



SR MARIE BRITZA RSM

Calvary Health Care, Adelaide

Being a participant in the Mercy Ethos Program was for me both a privilege and a delight, as this was my first time in Ireland. It was good to be on this amazing journey with Catherine and other participants from Australia, New Zealand, Newfoundland and Papua New Guinea. Hearing Catherine's story, being in the Baggot Street house where she lived reconnected me with the passion of Catherine, her joys and struggles yet her determination to listen to her God enabling her to meet the needs of the poor of her time in Dublin.

By listening again to some of the history of Ireland at that time also helped me understand more of the Mercy story. The journey of Catherine's story came alive in me to recreate our story, and my story. I was particularly struck by her vision and her practical approach to life. Being in the classroom, the room where she died, walking the streets of Dublin and the house and the stairs grounded me and enabled me to feel that this was sacred space. Visiting Georges Hill where Catherine made her vows was a moving experience as we the Sisters of Mercy present renewed our vows. I have been enriched by attending the Mercy Ethos Program and I enjoyed every moment of the program.

On the Wednesday we went to Glendalough for the day which gave me space to reflect on the previous two days. This was another sacred place and it was good to walk reflectively around the lakes. I enjoyed the Mercy hospitality offered by the staff at Baggot St. The Program was excellent and I felt honoured to be a participant. My life in Mercy has been deepened and influenced in a new way.

Maria McGuinness rsm in her input on "Living Mercy Today" defined mercy as "Mercy is that within us that motivates us to respond with compassion to the suffering of others." This quote is similar to our chapter statement. I know that my ministry too will be enhanced by Catherine's story, our story.

Mercy is that within us that motivates us to respond with compassion to the suffering of others.



MICHELLE CARRICK

Santa Maria College, Attadale, WA

It was a great privilege to represent Santa Maria College at the recent Mercy Ethos Program named 'Catherine's Story, Our Story'. I feel very blessed to have had such a rich experience of Mercy in Dublin where Catherine McAuley lived, worked and died.

Ireland's history and culture made a deep impression on me. I experienced first hand the warmth of the local people – something I found amazing when learning of the constant challenges faced throughout their history, whether invasion and repression, civil war or recurring economic hardship. The Mercy story is entwined with this story of suffering people in need of practical assistance.

The program included excellent course input and first hand experience of Mercy related historical sites in and around Dublin. Coolock House, where Catherine made her plan to build a House of Mercy, and the Presentation Convent at Georges Hill, where she took her final vows, were highlights.

Being part of a diverse group of participants was also an enriching experience. Included were Mercy sisters, lay people from education, family services and health ministries as well as Mercy board members. Rich conversations emerged from workshops about Mercy leadership and values in contemporary contexts.

The Mercy Ethos Program provided an opportunity to contemplate the essence of who Catherine was and better understand the challenges she faced. Over the course of the week it was just so evident that Catherine led a life of great meaning and purpose. I came away from the program reminded of the centrality of faith to Catherine's mission and her amazing resourcefulness and practicality in undertaking her ministry.

The program has gifted me with renewed vision in my role as a teacher and leader of the Religious Education learning area in a Mercy school. Mercy has much to offer young people of today. Catherine's story challenges us to live a life of meaning and great impact focused on the Gospel. I sincerely thank Carmel Crawford and Annette Schneider for their organisation and facilitation of the 2013 Mercy Ethos Program.



MARGARET BANKS

McAuley Community Services for Women, Victoria

Joining the April 2013 Mercy Ethos Program and pilgrimage was indeed an amazing privilege. To be with people focused on the work of Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy gave our group a united sense of purpose that I am sure will continue to sustain us in our work, and encourage us to continually reach higher goals to support women and children who experience vulnerability.

At McAuley Community Services for Women (McAuley) we deliver a number of programs that directly demonstrate the work of Catherine McAuley. Catherine housed and supported young women who experienced abuse whilst in service in the huge Georgian houses of Dublin; we welcome women and children into the McAuley Care refuge – short term crisis, as well as longer term - as they escape family violence. We have many volunteers, and many of the young wealthy women from those very same Georgian houses were also welcomed into Baggot Street community as "volunteers" who assisted in the work within and outside of the house; tending the sick, visiting the imprisoned etc. Some became Sisters of Mercy and some did not.

Catherine gave respite and support to women and children with health issues; she provided support for their health needs as we do at McAuley House with women experiencing homelessness and mental health issues. Catherine found work for young women to make them self supporting as we do through our McAuley Works employment program with women who experience vulnerability and disadvantage. She taught the children basic skills as we do to support children who accompany their mothers in our refuges.

When I saw the grave of Catherine McAuley at Baggot Street and learned that she had requested to be buried in the earth, it spoke to me of a woman who showed deep humility. She did not want to be buried in the crypt of the local church of St Teresa where the previous thirteen sisters who had died at Baggot Street were buried. Instead she sought to be buried in the style of a pauper. Catherine demonstrated that she had a deep sense of connectedness with all humanity.

When I heard of the Sisters who followed the example of Catherine and who went out to places far from Dublin to set up Foundations all over Ireland and then far beyond, it spoke to me of women of steadfast vision and unflinching determination.

Catherine's example shows us that faith and clarity of purpose can allow us to achieve what might otherwise seem overwhelming. As we at McAuley move towards the building of the new McAuley House in Footscray and need to find a significant amount of money to achieve our purposes, we need every possible commitment and every possible ounce of dedication. The "Can Do" attitude of the Sisters of Mercy is before us as an enduring inspiration and drive.



SR ROS CARR RSM

Mater Health Services, North Queensland

The journals we were given at the start of the Mercy Ethos program placed the words of Catherine McAuley from our Mercy Constitutions under the space left for our group photo: "The tender Mercy of our God has given us one another." These words took on a new significance for me after the week I spent in Dublin with a wonderful group of men and women in leadership roles in various Mercy ministries, as I appreciated more fully how the mission of Mercy is being carried forward into the future. The dual focus of the program we experienced enabled us to have both a foot in the past and a foot in the present by grounding us in the origins of the Mercy story while exploring what that story meant for us in our contemporary contexts, particularly leadership in ministry.

For me, the experience of meeting Catherine again through being in her house at Baggot Street, praying in her room, sitting in the Coolock house parlour where the seeds of her dream germinated, not only strengthened the personal bond I feel with her as a Sister of Mercy, but also re-ignited my desire to share the experience of God's mercy with others especially the most vulnerable. Hearing again the story of Catherine's compassion for Mrs Harper, the woman she cared for in Baggot Street instead of placing her in an asylum, touched me in a special way because of my own ministry in mental health.

Those presenting Catherine's story gave me a real 'heart-knowledge' of her as a woman of profound faith, extraordinary compassion and a wonderful sense of humour – and not simply some sort of pious figure on a lofty pedestal. Being reminded again by Dervilla Byrne rsm of her sorrows and failures, as well as joys and successes, I found encouragement to persevere and to trust in God's providence as we face the challenges of maintaining quality health care based on Gospel values in an increasingly difficult operating environment.

The work we did with Maria McGuinness rsm and Annette Schneider rsm around values, organisational culture and leadership highlighted the importance for me as a member of a Board of one of our Mercy ministries, of always remaining focused on what our 'core business' is, so that it remains as Annette reminded us, 'at the centre of our decision-making about a preferred future.'

While returning to the roots of the Mercy story and Catherine's life was inspirational, so was the opportunity to interact with so many Mercy women and men passionate and articulate about their own ministries. Faced with diminishing numbers of vowed Mercy women, it is uplifting to see how Catherine's vision for incarnating God's mercy for those in need is being embraced whole-heartedly by our colleagues and partners in ministry.

One of the enduring memories I have of our visit to Catherine's land is that of golden daffodils in abundance everywhere, heralding spring and new beginnings, and I suspect these will serve as a lasting reminder to me of the special significance of this Mercy Ethos program in my own life journey.



The first Seeds of Justice student event for 2013 was held at Holy Cross Centre, Templestowe on 23 and 24 May. Students from across fifteen Mercy sponsored and affiliated colleges across Victoria participated in the two days and reflected on the theme “Who is Mercy?” Inspired by keynote speakers, various ‘ministry placements’ across Melbourne and by their own peers, students returned to their schools empowered to act and to make a difference.

WE THANK THE STUDENTS FROM PADUA COLLEGE, MORNINGTON, FOR THE FOLLOWING REFLECTION WHICH CAPTURES THE EXPERIENCE.

The first of the 2013 Seeds of Justice Conference explored the concept of Mercy. Along with fourteen other Mercy-associated schools we listened to a range of guest speakers who encouraged us to delve into the question “Who is Mercy?”

Guest speakers included Sr Kath Tierney rsm, a former Mercy Congregation Leader; Br Harry Prout fms and Kerry Joyce from the Exodus community in West Heidelberg; Shaku Robertson, PR and Communications Manager from McAuley Community Services for Women (MCSW), and Sr Anila Issac,

who also accompanied us on a placement. We also had group activities with the 63 students who attended, only five of them boys.

Sr Kath (pictured below with students and staff) discussed how it can seem quite glamorous to go and do big gestures like going to Africa, but there is help needed in our own backyard. Br Harry talked about West Heidelberg which is rated the sixth poorest place in Victoria. He introduced us to Kerry, who shared with us her inspiring story of courage and forgiveness. She demonstrated the virtue of generosity in the face of hardship through her work in the community of West Heidelberg. Sheku told us that women show up with small children in the middle of the night with nothing but the clothes on their backs. She also talked about the shockingly high number of women who will experience domestic violence in Australia.

Part of the experience was to go on short placements to a range of organisations which provided particular services to people in need. They ranged from aged care facilities to crisis care for women. We went to two different placements. Bella branched off to Fr Bob’s food van in St Kilda. The food van was on the same corner as the Gatwick Hotel. As well as assisting giving out food, water and dinner for the cold evening ahead and for the coming days, we also received a tour through the Gatwick. This was not a great place but still something for those who needed some form of shelter. It was once home to the rich and famous; now it is home to the destitute. The rest of us went to a homework club in the public housing district in Carlton. In this district we found many Somali families living in poor conditions in small flats. After a little confusion, we went and helped children aged 12–17 with all sorts of homework, from Italian and French to Chemistry and Physics. We were told that often these children came to do their homework here because the flats they were living in were so crowded and noisy.

The conference was a great experience and was truly enlightening. We all felt that we had a glimpse into the lives of those less privileged than ourselves. We were told that the response of the Sisters of Mercy is always changing and adapted to meet the needs and demands at the time. We would also like to thank Mrs Young (pictured below top right with students from Padua College) for providing this wonderful opportunity to experience a taste of a different ‘world’ away from the Peninsula. We all hope now that we can bring back what we have learnt into our school community by spreading the Mercy spirit and making a difference. The Seeds of Justice program was an eye opening and unforgettable experience.

Kate Mililli, Sam Cheers, Jess Kerr, Bella Seal and Hailey Williams – Year 11 Padua College, Mornington



PRINCIPALS MEET IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Front Row: Dr Amelia Toffoli, Darren McGregor, Ms Julie Ryan, Mrs Lucy Molony, Ms Mary Farah, Mr John Shannon
2nd Row: Mr Ian Elder, Sr Mary Moloney rsm, Mrs Elizabeth Monahan, Mr Eugene Lynch
3rd Row: Ms Jenny Hickey, Dr Tim McDonald, Mr Peter White, Ms Christine Garstin, Mr Darren Atkinson
4th Row: Dr John Brick, Mr Chris Cole, Mr Tony Wheeler, Mr Phil Morison, Mr Joe Konyneburg, Ms Anna Negro, Mr Craig Holmes

On 13 & 14 May, Principals from Mercy Colleges and Mercy Education Board Directors enjoyed the warmth of hospitality offered by Santa Maria College, Attadale and St Brigid's College, Lesmurdie. College Principals, Mr Ian Elder and Dr Amelia Toffoli, prepared a comprehensive program over the two days incorporating presentations on current and future developments at the colleges, engaging reports from staff and students on local initiatives and programs and extensive tours of both colleges. Intermixed with this of course were the friendly smiles from staff and students, beautiful catering and the ever-available comfortable cup of tea.

A significant part of the program was meeting and hearing from the new Director of Catholic Education in Western Australia, Dr Tim McDonald. Tim commenced his appointment as Director in November 2012 and succeeded past Director, Mr Ron Dullard, who held the position for the past nine years.

Tim has extensive experience in education especially following his most recent professional appointment as an Associate Professor specialising in classroom management at Edith Cowan University for the past ten years. Tim's presentation to Principals and Board Directors provided an overview on the provision of Catholic Education in Western Australia, and the work of the CEOWA office in servicing the entire state. Tim's driving ambition is for "Catholic Education to be a system where all people flourish".

In between the two day program, Mercy Education conducted its annual Public General Meeting on the evening of 13 May and hosted Sisters of Mercy, Principals, staff, College Council members and friends of Mercy Education. The meeting was followed by guests enjoying a beautiful meal in the magnificent surrounds of the McDonald Centre at Santa Maria College and we once again thank Ian Elder and his staff for the wonderful hospitality.

2013 AUSTRALASIAN MERCY SECONDARY SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION (AMSSA) CONFERENCE AUCKLAND, AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

The eleventh biennial AMSSA Conference was hosted with 'extravagant' hospitality at Carmel College, Auckland from Saturday 13 – Tuesday 16 July. The theme for the conference was *Mercy Alive* and the 150 delegates and 53 student delegates lived out the theme over the four days, listening to outstanding keynote speakers and participating in engaging workshops. The concurrent programs provided new friendships, collegial support and networking opportunities for the representatives from the 46 Mercy schools, governing boards and members of the Congregation/Institute of Sisters of Mercy across Aotearoa New Zealand, Samoa, Tonga, Papua New Guinea and Australia.

The theme for the conference was Mercy Alive and the 150 delegates and 53 student delegates lived out the theme over the four days, listening to outstanding keynote speakers and participating in engaging workshops.



Top: Keynote speaker, Sr Marilyn Lacey rsm with Mr Alex Marcus, Principal of Mercy Secondary School Yarpas (MSSY), PNG
Above: MSSY Deputy Principal, Susan Nianguma and student delegate Vera Rasa.



MERCEDES COLLEGE
Perth, WA 1846



ACADEMY OF MARY
IMMACULATE
Fitzroy, VIC 1857



SACRED HEART
COLLEGE
Geelong, VIC 1860



CATHOLIC
COLLEGE BENDIGO
Bendigo, VIC 1876



ST ALOYSIUS
COLLEGE
North Melbourne, VIC
1887



SACRED HEART
COLLEGE
Kyneton, VIC 1889



MOUNT LILYDALE
MERCY COLLEGE
Lilydale, VIC 1896



ST JOSEPH'S
COLLEGE
Mildura, VIC 1906



OUR LADY OF
MERCY COLLEGE
Heidelberg, VIC 1910



ST BRIGID'S
COLLEGE
Lesmurdie, WA 1926



SANTA MARIA
COLLEGE
Attadale WA 1937



St Ann's College amalgamated to
EMMANUEL
COLLEGE
Warmambool, VIC 1872

2013 AMSSA CONFERENCE AUCKLAND, NZ CONTINUED

International keynote speakers included **Megan McKenna** from New York City, **Sr Marilyn Lacey rsm** from California and **Dr Deborah Stevens** from New Zealand. Megan is an internationally known author, theologian, storyteller and lecturer. Her stories, the breaking open of the Scriptures and her deep understanding of justice and mercy offered new learnings to all. Sr Marilyn, who visited Australia in March last year, spoke passionately about her work with refugees in the US, Africa and Southeast Asia. She is the founder and executive director of ***Mercy Beyond Borders***, a non-profit organisation which partners with displaced women and children in South Sudan and Haiti to alleviate their extreme poverty. Deborah, a scientist and doctoral researcher at the University of Waikato, engaged her audiences in the discipline of Bioethics and her dreams for New Zealand to become the first country in the world to integrate a dedicated bioethics curriculum at secondary school level.

Congratulations to the AMSSA Executive members, conference organisers and many helpers who put together a wonderful conference. Special thanks to our hosts, Carmel College Principal, Kath Deady, and her dedicated staff for a most enjoyable four days of Mercy coming alive.

Finally, we congratulate **Sheena Barber**, Principal of Mercedes College, Perth on her election as the new President of AMSSA.



Above: Student delegates reporting back on their experiences of the conference program. From left, representatives from Mercy Secondary School Yarapos, PNG; St Mary's College, Wellington; OLMC Burraneer; Academy of Mary Immaculate, Fitzroy; Mercy College, Chatswood; All Hallows School, Brisbane; OLMC Parramatta