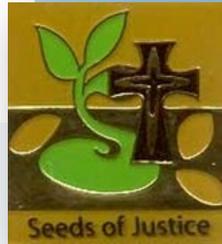




# Mercy Education



## Seeds of Justice

### 2021 Report

Seeds of Justice events in 2021 continued despite the difficulties that the year presented. With the help of the very capable and adaptable Seeds of Justice planning committee, we gathered remotely for two events this year.

This first was on the 21st of May, and we were delighted that several schools were able to join us via Google Meet, including St Brigid's College Lesmurdie, Mercedes College Perth and Santa Maria College Attadale (congratulations to those students and their teachers for committing to a very early start to the day to be part of it!). We were also joined by groups from Academy of Mary Immaculate Fitzroy, Catherine McAuley College Bendigo, Our Lady of Mercy College Heidelberg, St Joseph's College Mildura, Sacred Heart College Geelong, Damascus College in Ballarat, St Aloysius College North Melbourne, Sacred Heart College Kyneton, and Mount Lilydale Mercy College.

During the day, we were extremely fortunate to hear from the dynamic and engaging Sister Angela Reed RSM, who spoke to us about the ways in which Mercy empowers women, off the back of her work with women who have been trafficked across the globe, and her very important work with the United Nations. Sister Angela very generously allowed time for a Question-and-Answer session, which students and staff found invaluable.

It was a unique and wonderful opportunity to hear about the works of Mercy beyond our school gates and the students felt inspired to spend time collating their own ideas as to what they might do in their own communities to further this work.

*Image: Top right: Seeds of Justice Student Event—Western Australia*

### 2021 SEMINAR THEMES

- Responding to the call
- To be as shining lamps:  
*Mercy empowering women*
- Opening the Doors of Mercy

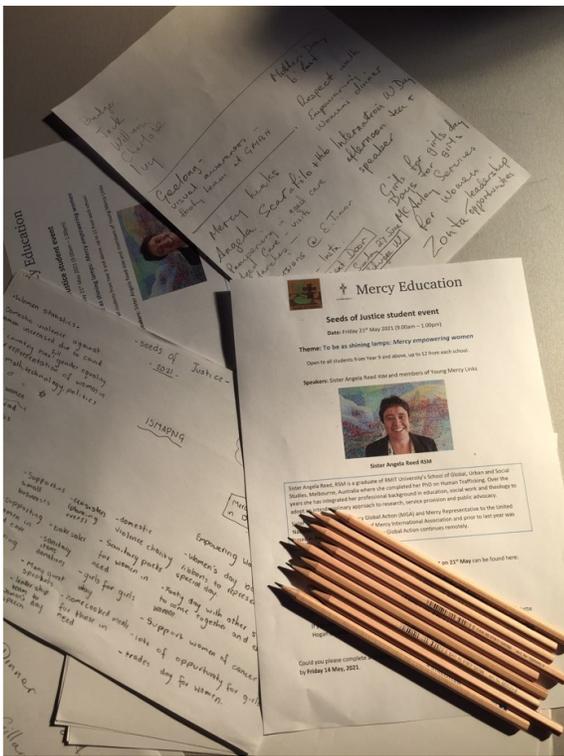
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# Seeds of Justice 2021 Report *continued*

Some of the wonderful ideas to emerge included:

- Initiating an International Women’s Day breakfast with speakers
- Creating a Justice Hall of Fame highlighting the work of school alumni who are doing amazing things in social justice
- Being involved in Sharing the Dignity drives, collecting sanitary products for women who might need them
- Connecting with groups like the ‘Zonta’ Women’s Club

During both of our Seeds of Justice days this year, we also heard from Angela Scarfalo on behalf of Young Mercy Links, to get some inspiration as to what sort of ways our Mercy students can stay connected in Mercy beyond the school gates. We also heard about initiatives such as the Nasir Moradi art exhibition which finally occurred after the lifting of restrictions in November of 2021.



Images:

Above: *To be as shining lamps: Mercy empowering women*

Top Right: Students, Mercedes College Perth WA

Right: Students, Sacred Heart College, Kyneton VIC

*“To be as shining lamps: Mercy empowering women”*

After the success of our virtual event in May, and due to our growing awareness that hosting events remotely would give us the best chance for allowing the event to go ahead (and even allow individual students who were not at school to attend) we elected to host the second Seeds of Justice event remotely in October.

A number of schools joined us for our “Opening the Doors of Mercy” event, where our keynote speakers were Sally Morgan and Asma Mohammed Rahim, from the Hope Co-op. Both presentations were incredibly engaging and informative, and resulted in some terrific responses and ideas from students at the various schools in attendance. As noted by the students from Mercy Regional College in Camperdown, “the presentation showed us that people seeking asylum are not a burden, but humans with similar aspirations to our own”. Students from Sacred Heart College, Kyneton appreciated Asma’s courage and her parting comment, “we are all human beings wanting to be treated equally and receive a proper education and life”.

Laura Kemp, a student at Padua College, Mornington reflected, “I cannot express how grateful I am for the time you have given us today. I came here today with the focus of learning as much as I could (as seeking asylum in Australia is not a topic I am very familiar with, but I know it is so important to have an understanding of). To have this opportunity and information presented today has been incredibly eye-opening. I have been so inspired to see what I, my family and my community can do to contribute to the positive change your work is creating. This experience has been something that I will never forget (you should definitely consider running workshops with entire schools if this is possible).”

The day included a presentation from Young Mercy Links, and time for schools to dream and plan for what will happen next in their schools to support people seeking asylum in our country.

*Images:*

*Top right: Opening the doors of Mercy at Mercy College Camperdown VIC*

*Right: St Aloysius College, North Melbourne students*



## *“Opening the doors of Mercy”*

## Seeds of Justice 2021 Report *continued*

2021 was a challenge for staff and students, but perhaps a year when staying connected to each other and considering the experience of those beyond our own backyard has been more important than ever. Special thanks must go to Brenda Keenan from Mercy Education for her ongoing support of the Seeds of Justice project, and to our wonderfully committed and hardworking Seeds committee members: Catherine Glenister, Sue Moran, Mary de Bono, Annie O'Shannessy, Freya Egberts, Jo Saunders and Lauren Marquet. A special thanks is extended to the staff at Mercy Education (Effie Coulson, in particular) and to our schools who support our program and make it possible for students to attend.

### **Bernadette Hogan**

Chairperson – Seeds of Justice Committee



*Images above from above left to right clockwise: Students; Mount Lilydale Mercy College VIC, Sacred Heart College Geelong VIC, Mercy College Coburg, VIC and Sacred Heart College, Kyneton VIC.*

## Western Australia—Seeds of Justice 2021 Report

Santa Maria College, as a member of Mercy Education Ltd., has established a chapter of ‘Seeds of Justice’ in Western Australia for students in schools who carry the Mercy charism.

- To form students and staff in the Mercy charism;
- To raise awareness of contemporary issues in social justice; and
- To facilitate new links between students and staff of Western Australian Mercy schools.

Students from Santa Maria College, St Brigid’s College, and Aranmore Catholic College participated in a conference-style program, over two days, held at St John of God Retreat Centre in Shoalwater this week. The theme of the conference allowed students to be “Empowered to respond to both the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor”. The theme allowed both staff and students to further explore this key area of justice identified by the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISMAPNG). As articulated in the ISMAPNG 2017 Chapter Statement, “disturbed by the despair and suffering of many peoples and the degradation of Earth, we are impelled to reflective action for gospel justice.”

Surrounded by like-minded people, it’s safe to say that the Seeds of Justice conference was an eye-opening and valuable experience. Past student Jacqui Daniels (Lange, Class of 1986) and owner of *nest’d*, a recycling-based boutique, provided students with an opportunity to broaden their understanding of the wider society and the dynamics of indigenous heritage. Jacqui also spoke of the importance of recycling and upcycling and engaged us in a practical session, sewing over old reworked patches of jeans; creating tears, rips, and patterns with thread, to imitate and inspire the upcycling within us.

On day two, the group completed service at [Naragebup](#), the Rockingham Environmental Centre, being true ‘seeds’ and doing our part to sustain and nurture God’s creation. Overall, the 2021 Seeds of Justice conference was extremely valuable and inspiring. It stirred intrigue, questioning, and emotion in us all. The conference would not have been a success without the wonderful commitment of our teachers Ms Rosa Speranza and Mrs Melissa Trolio, who dedicated time and effort to make this conference a success.

Below, students Sienna Romeri (Year 11), Nishi Jayawickrema (Year 10) and Myra Lee (Year 10) write about their experiences.

*We were given an opportunity to hear from a variety of guest speakers and teaching staff. Christine Aldous, a former teacher and environmental and refugee educator, gave us insights into the history of creation teachings from a variety of perspectives and how polluted other countries are compared to our own. From her own photographs and real-life experiences, we gained a wider perspective of how privileged the lives we lead are.*

*To finish off the day and gather our thoughts we walked a labyrinth to help relax our minds and de-stress. At night, we researched our ecological footprints and calculated our scores. Some students were surprised with their footprint whilst others were proud.*

*This was an eye-opener because we haven’t focused on how important our ecological footprints are at school and don’t realise how destructive we can be to the environment. To end a busy day, we viewed David Attenborough’s witness statement to the environment and discovered how sacred creation around us truly is.*

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*“Responding to the call”*

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*Images above: Students at WA Event—Responding to the Call.*

