



AMSSA Report November 2016

Welcome to the last newsletter of 2016. I trust you enjoy the articles on the Mercy Student Conference and the Mercy Day celebrations in several of our schools.

Since our last newsletter the Mercy Student Conference was held in Sydney. Sixty-seven students and fifteen teachers from Mercy schools from Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea attended the Conference hosted by Sydney's Mercy 5 Schools. The five-day event was held at St Joseph's Centre for Reflective Living in Baulkham Hills in the north-western suburbs of Sydney. It was a very successful conference with the organising committee complimenting the students who attended on their enthusiasm, commitment and participation. Thank you to all involved in the planning and organising of the Conference and all the staff who attended. I invite you to read the article about the Conference in the Newsletter written by Kerri-Anne Ramsay.

Thank you to the many Mercy schools who have sent in articles and photos of their Mercy Day celebrations in this Jubilee Year of Mercy. It will provide information and inspiration to schools for their future Mercy Day celebrations.

Lat Friday, I represented Julie Ryan, the President of AMSSA at a meeting of Mercy principals from across Australia. Principals came from Perth, North Queensland, country NSW and Sydney and were hosted by Stephen Walsh at Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta. The principals who attended are keen to set up a network of Mercy principals under the auspices of AMSSA. There was much discussion about their plans for the network and input was provided by Sr Ailsa Mackinnon rsm, the Director of Mercy Works, the Sydney Mercy 5

Coordinators, Caitlin Pfafflin and Gabby Scanlon and myself. We were joined by the new Bishop of Parramatta, Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen who spoke to the group and joined us for lunch with Sr

Catherine Ryan, the Congregation Leader of the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta and Sr Mary Louise Petro rsm, the incoming Leader of the Congregation.

Please note in your diaries the dates for our Mercy Staff Conference, "Sustaining the Spirit of Mercy" which will be held in Melbourne from August 3-5, 2017 at OLMC Heidelberg.

Thank you to all our members for your ongoing support of AMSSA. I wish you the peace and joy of Christmas and I trust that you enjoy the holiday break.

Kitty Guerin

Executive Officer



Back Row: left Kitty Guerin AMSSA Executive Officer, Gavin Dykes Albury, Geoff Mills Perth, David Finch Herberton, Stephen Walsh Parramatta, Jeanette Rufalo Mackay, Mark Pauschmann Orange

Front Row: Paulina Skerman Townsville, Nicole Christensen North Sydney, Laetitia Richmond Westmead

BIENNIAL AMSSA STUDENT CONFERENCE

2016

From the 24th to the 28th of September 2016 sixty-seven students and fifteen teachers from Mercy schools located in Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea attended the Biennial AMSSA Student Conference hosted by Sydney's Mercy 5 Schools. The five day event was held at St Joseph's Centre for Reflective Living in Baulkham Hills in the north western suburbs of Sydney.

The conference invited students to take a step closer to becoming bridges of Mercy. Participants reflected on questions such as: What does Mercy look like? How might I become a path to Mercy? What qualities are needed to make a difference to others – to bridge the gap? What is Pope Francis calling us to do in this Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy and how can I incorporate this into everyday habits? Throughout the conference students engaged in a variety of prayer experiences, heard from guest speakers working to achieve justice in a range of Mercy projects and went on a pilgrimage through Sydney in order to shape their own response to these questions in the context of the global Mercy community. The conference was also an opportunity to develop bonds of friendship with their peers in other Mercy schools.

Faith

Attendees flew into Sydney on Mercy Day. The Conference commenced with a Welcome to Country followed by a celebration of the Eucharist. Other prayer experiences during the conference included morning prayer in the centre's Canisius Prayer Labyrinth and a sung prayer service in Maori led by the New Zealand students.



Justice

Throughout the conference students had the privilege of hearing from a range of guest speakers engaged in Mercy ministries. Sessions included talks on the Rahamim Ecology Centre in Bathurst; a visit and lunch from the House of Welcome; Mercy Works on their wide range of ministries carried out in Australia, Papua New Guinea and Timor Leste; Mercy International Association on ending human trafficking; and the Mercy Foundation on ending homelessness.

On the last full day of the conference students participated in a range of justice themed sessions which were designed to encourage reflection and action for justice. This included a Justice Market where students shared what they were already doing in their own schools to promote justice. After the market, attendees were given time to workshop ideas from the Justice Market that may work in their own college communities. It is hoped that upon returning to school after the holiday break these participants might be able to successfully implement some new justice initiatives.



Mercy Heritage

A highlight for many students who came from outside of Sydney was a day of pilgrimage. Pilgrimage day commenced with a visit to Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College in North Sydney where students were able to see the Mother Ignatius McQuoin Memorial Chapel and appreciate the College's grounds. The pilgrimage then continued to Mary Mackillop Place where they were able to pray at the shrine of Australia's only canonised saint.

After a day of crossing the Sydney Harbour Bridge and walking through the historic Rocks area where the Sisters of Mercy, North Sydney first began their ministry, pilgrims caught the Parramatta River Cat and journeyed to Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta. At Parramatta, students once again learnt about the history and significance of one of the sacred places of the Sydney Mercy congregations within the grounds of Australia's first convent and the burial site of Mother Mary Clare Dunphy. The day was truly spectacular with a cloudless sky and perfect conditions for enjoying the beauty of Sydney Harbour and the Parramatta River.



Bonds of Friendship

The conference was also filled with a spirit of joy and fun. Queen's Bohemian Rhapsody was a popular song of choice throughout the event and there were many spontaneous moments of song – often prompted by the students from New Zealand and Bathurst. The whole conference was in stitches with a fast paced and highly entertaining Trivia Night on the final evening. The balance between work and fun which Catherine McAuley wrote about when she said 'dance every evening' was certainly embraced throughout the five days we gathered together.

With Thanks

The AMSSA Student Conference Planning Committee would like to acknowledge the efforts and investment of the Sydney Mercy 5 Principals and College communities for providing the necessary release time for committee meetings and generously supplying items for the conference bags. We would also like to acknowledge the generous gift of time and support by staff who accompanied students to the conference or attending sessions during their school holidays. A big thank you must also go to the presenters who gave their time to come and present at the conference. The Australasian Mercy Secondary Schools Association (AMSSA) generously supported the conference and we thank AMSSA and Kitty Guerin for this support. Finally, we would like to acknowledge the Sisters of Mercy, North Sydney and Parramatta for their hospitality on pilgrimage day and ongoing support with the Mercy 5 schools in enabling Caitlin Pfafflin

and Gabby Scanlon to oversee the preparation and organisation of the conference in their capacity as Mercy 5 Coordinators.

By: Kerri-Anne Ramsay Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College North Sydney on behalf of the AMSSA Student Conference Planning Committee:

Ann-Marie Herd – Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta
Danielle Rodrigues - Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta
GabieStojanovski – Mercy College Chatswood
Genevieve Banks – Catherine McAuley Westmead
Gilda Pussich - Our Lady of Mercy Catholic College Burraneer
Tess Napoli – Our Lady of Mercy Catholic College Burraneer

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DAMASCUS COLLEGE CELEBRATES MERCY

On Tuesday 30th August, Damascus College celebrated Catherine McAuley Day. The students re-enacted a scene from Baggot Street, Dublin involving numerous students acting as Sisters of Mercy, including Catherine McAuley herself.

The values of Justice, Wisdom, Strength, Faith and Compassion and a prayer were presented to the College. There were many musical performances where students played an instrument or sung a song in celebration of McAuley Day.

On Wednesday, September 14, all Damascus students and staff celebrated Damascus Day and the Year of Mercy.



Celebrations began with a whole of school mass, where mercy and being merciful were at the centre of the homily. The Damascus school choir led us beautifully in celebration through song and prayer.



Mass was followed by a Festival of activities where the campus was buzzing with positive energy and excitement. Students took part in an Amazing Race Challenge where they had to visit all the activities, including: the jumping castle, movie mural, rowing challenge, dance off, inflatable twister and much much more.

Students and staff then enjoyed a Performance Showcase of the many musical talents of Damascus students, where students played instruments, sung songs and danced in celebration of Damascus and the Year of Mercy.

MERCY DAY CELEBRATIONS

SACRED HEART COLLEGE KYNETON

Celebrating Mercy Day is a wonderful way to finish off the term. We began with a whole school assembly where we celebrated all the wonderful works and outreach programs that our students and school community are involved in. Students reported on the Seeds of Justice conferences and the work done with the Sacred Earth group. We presented a gift of appreciation to two senior students for their work in Camp Campaspe; a holiday program which is growing each year. We were blessed with a presentation by Sr Therese Power rsm as she spoke of the Corporal Works of Mercy. It was a treat to have one of the Sisters of Mercy spend some time with us and have a comfortable cup of tea.



Like best laid plans we intended to have a cross country run and a colour run, but as the heavens have been open for the last couple of weeks, the creeks and rivers are flooded in Kyneton and this part of our celebration has been postponed for a sunny day.



However, we still managed to enjoy the Mission Mart and the various activities that each year level organised. Our Mercy Day was heaps of fun as well as raising money for McAuley Women's Services. Next year we will pray for sun.

Ms Annie O'Shannessy
Director of Catholic Identity

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MERCEDES COLLEGE

EVERYBODY NEEDS A LITTLE BIT OF MERCY

In this Jubilee Year of Mercy Year 10 students at Mercedes College, Springfield, SA, are advocating for those in need. In Term 3 the Year 10 students usually work on a unit called 'Challenging the Status Quo'. It is an excellent topic that allows the students to re-think and reflect upon the messages our society and media give us against the backdrop of the Gospel message and how God calls us to live. It is challenging for both students and teachers. The topic usually culminates in the students writing an essay looking at specific questions based on the content taught.

This year the unit has been re-worked to allow the students to take action during Mercy Week at Mercedes College. The essay has been changed to a stall or activity that needs to be planned and set up during Mercy Week on the College grounds at lunchtime. The purpose of the stalls/activities is to advocate for 'Catholic Charities' sharing information and statistics about those in need 'in our own backyard'.

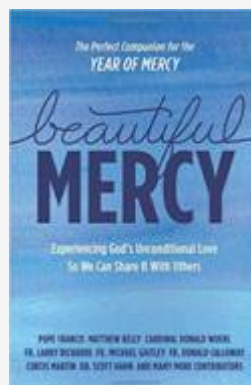


Catholic Charities has launched a me4u website that highlights and celebrates the fundraising work done in schools to help those in need 'in our own backyard.' The main focus of the campaign is to reinforce Saint Mary MacKillop's message - 'Never see a need without doing something about it.'

The Year 10 students and the website aim to show how everyone can make a difference even if it seems small – the website can be accessed [here](#)



Giving and receiving Mercy is central to living a life of passion and purpose. At Mercedes College, we have made an important decision to utilise a resource to help us infuse Mercy into our curriculum. The resource is a book called Beautiful Mercy. It was written by bestselling author Matthew Kelly who has enlisted the help of 24 incredible authors who witness to the power of God's mercy, provide simple practical tips on how to be an instrument of that mercy and bring hope to anyone searching for deeper meaning in their life. This book was used in our Year 10 Religious Education curriculum and has proven to be an outstanding resource.



Beautiful Mercy is an invitation to rediscover God's unconditional love so that we can share it with others. It includes contributions from: Pope Francis, Matthew Kelly, Dr. Scott Hahn, Cardinal Donald Wuerl, Cardinal Séan Patrick O Malley, Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, Christopher West, Dr. Carolyn Woo, Dr. Allen Hunt, Curtis Martin, Dan Burke, Jennifer Fulwiler, Fr. Mike Schmitz, Sarah Swafford, Lisa Brenninkmeyer, Fr. James Mallon, Msgr. Charles Pope, Sr. Helena Burns, Fr. Michael Gaitley, Fr. Don Calloway, Mother Olga Yaqob, Sr. Marie Veritas, Matt Fradd, Jackie Francois-Angel, Sr. Mary Madeline, Lisa Hendey, Kerry Webber, John Michael Talbot.

This book is an excellent resource and I highly recommend it. We have copies available to purchase. If you are interested, please feel free to contact me at ffarrugia@mercedes.catholic.edu.au

Mr Fernando Farrugia
Middle Years Religious Education Coordinator

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OUR LADY OF MERCY COLLEGE, BURRANEER

On Wednesday 21 September, Our Lady of Mercy Catholic College Burraneer celebrated Mercy Day; the special day in the year in which the school remembers the great works of Mercy begun by Catherine McAuley, taken forward by the Sisters of Mercy and continued here at OLMC.



The day began with Mass, where our Celebrant Fr Julian Belich conveyed in his homily, the importance and meaning of the words 'respect', 'justice', and 'mercy'. We recognised our special guests the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta: Sr Pat Anderson rsm, Sr Clare Coyle rsm, Sr Regina Murphy rsm, Sr Chanel James rsm and Sr Catherine Harris rsm. We also recognised members of our community for their contribution to sharing the Mercy values of the College. Throughout 2016, the students have been learning about the Mercy Values of the College: Excellence, Dignity, Compassion, Service, Justice, Hospitality and Stewardship. To commemorate the occasion each student and staff member was given a key ring engraved with one of our school values. Following our Mass, the OLMC students and staff dressed up in their 'M' theme costumes and joined in the disco, karaoke and arcade games.



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OUR LADY OF MERCY COLLEGE PARRAMATTA MERCY DAY 2016

On Friday September 16, the OLMC Parramatta community celebrated a very special Mercy Day, with Mass in St Patrick's Cathedral followed by fun activities in Parramatta Stadium. It was an extra special Mercy Day, taking place in the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. At the Mass, the community reflected on what it meant to be called by Christ to be people of Mercy and the legacy of the outgoing Year 12 group who invited all to be the 'key to the Mercy scene in 2016'. It was yet another memorable Mercy Day, which continues to be a much-loved highlight of the school year for Mercy Girls.





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AMSSA Staff Conference

August 8 – 10 2019

Monte Sant'Angelo Mercy College, North Sydney

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