



JOURNEYS

NEWSLETTER

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LOVE IS AT THE HEART OF OUR MISSION

As Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries, we are both humbled and privileged to witness this love of neighbour demonstrated every day by our people in our colleges, health and aged care facilities and in our social outreach endeavours.

Jesus asks just one thing of everyone: to love one another as he loves us.

This love that Jesus asks of us was so beautifully evidenced when Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. He then asked them (and us) to do the same.

Yes, it is up to us. As St Teresa of Avila exclaimed in her challenging poem:

Christ now has no body on earth but yours,

No hands but yours,

No feet but yours,

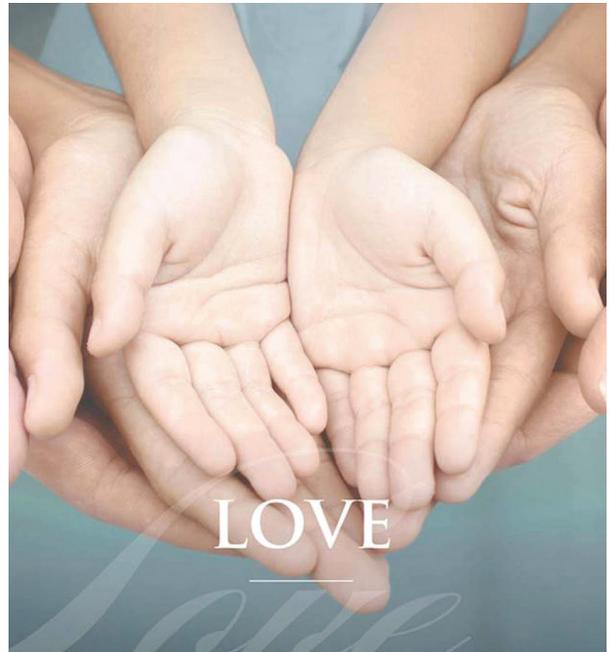
Yours are the eyes through which to look out on Christ's compassion for the world,

Yours are the feet with which He is to go about doing good,

Yours are the hands with which he is to bless men and women now.

This is what Mary Aikenhead Ministries strives to be about. To live the gospel as Jesus commanded. To provide healing love to all we encounter, especially the poor and marginalised.

For those of us privileged to attend the recent Mary Aikenhead Ministries conference in Hobart, we saw so many examples of how our people in each of our ministries are fulfilling Jesus' commandment to love one another.



As Pope Francis reminds us:

"The Church has made an option for the poor which is understood as a special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity, to which the whole Church bears witness"

(EG. 198)

It is the Trustees' challenge and joy to see the Mary Aikenhead Ministries mission of love of neighbour continue on into the future.

*Gary Humphrys
Trustee of Mary Aikenhead Ministries*

A PILGRIMAGE TO...

HOBART, MARCH 2018



Pilgrims gathered at "Footsteps Towards Freedom" in Hobart

*'I am standing on the shoulders
of the ones who came before me*

*I am stronger for their courage,
I am the wiser for their words*

*I am filled by their longing for
a fair and brighter future*

*I am grateful for their vision,
for their toiling on this earth'.*

"Standing On The Shoulders"
by J. Johnson Rouse

All those involved in Mary Aikenhead Ministries are standing on the shoulders of the first five courageous Sisters of Charity to come to Australia in 1838, the first religious women to come to our continent. Three of the five, Sisters John Cahill, Frances de Sales and Xavier Williams, went to Hobart in 1847 to care for the convicts, the orphans, the sick, those in prison, the marginalised and the voiceless. It is therefore appropriate that we go as pilgrims to Hobart to experience the Tasmania that the three sisters arrived into, so that we may be inspired by their story to be a voice for the marginalised.

Regardless of the number of times I have been involved with the Hobart pilgrimage I continue to find it a very emotional experience and I come away touched by a particular activity. In March, it was the experience at the Hobart wharf.

Our pilgrimage commenced with a gathering of pilgrims and a welcome from Sr Linda who then gave a brief account of why the three sisters came to Hobart. Following this we walked down to the Hobart wharf on Castray Esplanade, following the route the three sisters walked on their arrival. Here we listened to an account of the sisters' journey from Sydney on the 'Louisa' and their arrival in Hobart on 4th June 1847, followed by a time of contemplation. I could picture a bitterly cold, bleak June morning, the crowd gathered to greet them. How did they feel? What was I feeling now?

It was also at this wharf that the women convicts disembarked from the ships in the dark hours, and where they were separated from their children, before being marched to the Female Factory. The children were taken to the Queen's Asylum (orphanage); some of the children were never to see their mothers again.

Last year as part of the project "Footsteps Towards Freedom", three sculptures were erected at the wharf, two convict women and a child named Toby, to tell the story of our convict past. Inscribed on the base of the sculptures of the women are the typical crimes committed and the length of their sentences given while on the base of Toby's sculpture are the names and ages of the children. It was these very women and children that the Sisters came to bring hope and comfort to.

The vision for the artwork is to engage through artistic expression with visitors on a deeply emotional level. I can assure you it doesn't disappoint!

Many fellow pilgrims wiped away a tear or two as we left the wharf area.

Maria Wheeler rsc



Re-enactment of "Her Story" at the Cascades Female Factory historic site

IRELAND, MAY 2018

A pilgrimage is a ritual journey with a sacred purpose.

Every step along the way has meaning.

The pilgrim knows that life giving challenges will emerge.

A pilgrimage is not a vacation;

It is a transformational journey during which significant change takes place.

New insights are given.

Deeper understanding is attained.

New and old places in the heart are visited.

Blessings are received and healing takes place.

On return from the pilgrimage, life is seen with different eyes.

Nothing will ever be quite the same again.

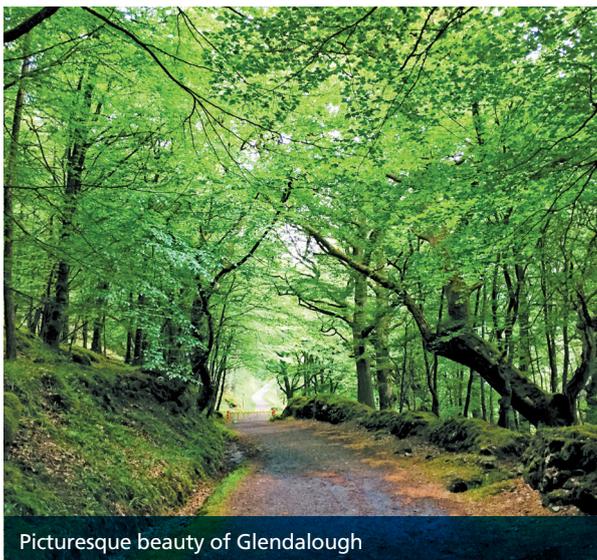
Macrina Wiederkehr

It was a beautiful experience to be within a group of 20 people from across Mary Aikenhead Ministries, in Ireland in May.

Of course there were many opportunities to see the sites of significance in the life of Mary Aikenhead, but in true Mary style, the Spirit moved in and through the group and moved us all.

In the words of the pilgrims:

I love this image I took at Glendalough...



Picturesque beauty of Glendalough

The journey ahead may be long and winding but along our path there is much beauty should we choose to see it.

Be purposeful in mind, be giving of heart and trust in the divine providence. We are where we are meant to be right now, so stop, rest, look up and enjoy.



Pilgrims gathered at Glendalough

I was particularly impressed by how sincerely and vitally the Sisters live and practice their fourth vow of service to the poor. Most of the Sisters are still amazingly engaged with life because they have done such fulfilling work in the service of others in areas of need including Zambia, working with the blind, working at Foxford Mills, teaching and advocating for the homeless. As a result they have countless interesting stories to tell and are across contemporary social issues. One conversation with Sr Lillian comes to mind where we spoke about everything from the referendum to the implications of artificial intelligence.

The Hospitality offered by so many, including the sisters who welcomed us into their homes was a standout for me. Sr Josephine seemed to meet us everywhere sharing her knowledge and appreciation for Mary's story, the people of Foxford who so proudly spent the day with us, the children who played Irish music before the tour, the Principals, teachers and students at Cork, those who accompanied us to Mary's grave and more. It was their passion and love that was so evident. Inspiring!



Sr Pauline Meegan and Jenny Washington, Pastoral Care Manager at St Vincent's Public Hospital Sydney

When the school principal described the challenges of introducing a new initiative to help the community, she said "we just do it anyway" (or words to that effect). For me this summed up much of what we learnt. That the spirit inspires and encourages, and while obstacles occur the determination and steadfast commitment to good inspired by Mary Aikenhead prevails. Divine inspiration at its very best!

It all seems very dreamlike now as each day of the Pilgrimage was filled with amazing experiences and special moments. My favourite of all was the travelling mass at Glendalough. To stand together at the ruin of St Saviour's church and celebrate mass in such a sacred place was unforgettable to me, especially as our beautiful journey was coming to an end.

Linda Ferrington rsc, *Trustee of Mary Aikenhead Ministries*, and Lisa McDonald, *Group Mission Leader, St Vincent's Health Australia*

MAM CONFERENCE

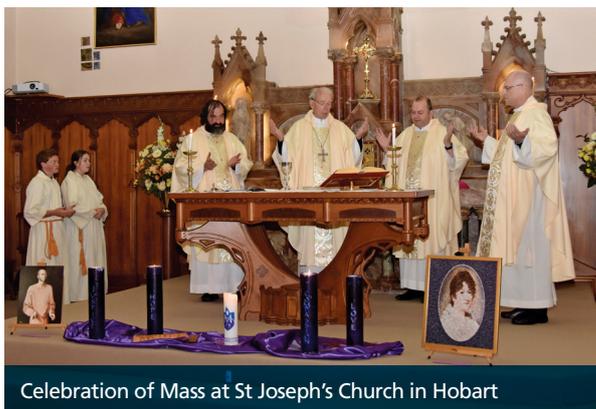
HOBART, 2018



The Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries with the Very Rev. Dr David Ranson
Left to right: Gary Humphrys, Janet Freeman, Very Rev. Dr David Ranson, David Alcock, Linda Ferrington rsc and Dr Tessa Ho

Our annual conference “The Heart of our Mission: Serving at the Margins” was held at the Grand Chancellor Hotel in Hobart on 10-11 May 2018. We were pleased to have over 180 delegates attend and whilst we did not have the weather on our side it certainly did not dampen everyone’s spirits. The rain was welcomed but just not all at once!

This year our keynote speaker was Father David Ranson who spoke on the topics of Mercy, Margin and Moment: Francis’ Moulding of the Church and New Wine, New Wineskins (Mark 2:21-22) New Models of Mission in the Australian Church. You can find a copy of Father Ranson’s keynote addresses together with photos and presentations from our Health and Education ministries at www.mamconferences.com.



Celebration of Mass at St Joseph’s Church in Hobart

We wish to thank all of the participants who attended the conference together with special guests, sponsors, MCs, staff and the students of Mt Carmel and St Aloysius Colleges for making the event a memorable one.



Music ministry from Mt Carmel College in Sandy Bay, Hobart

In 2019 Mary Aikenhead Ministries will be celebrating its 10th Anniversary. Our conference theme will be “The Heart of our Mission: Preferential Option for the Poor” and will be held on 22 and 23 July 2019 at the Catholic Leadership Centre in Melbourne.

We look forward to seeing you there!

David Alcock
Deputy Chair and 2018 Conference Convenor



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