



JOURNEYS

NEWSLETTER

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A CALL TO SERVICE

FOUNDATIONS OF LEADERSHIP FOR CATHOLIC MINISTRIES

In November 2011, the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries and St Vincents & Mater Health Sydney presented a two-day workshop in Baulkham Hills, Sydney, attended by 64 key leaders from Mary Aikenhead Ministries health, welfare and education ministries.

Two distinguished formation leaders from the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHAUSA) led the workshop. Brian Yanofchick, senior director of mission integration and leadership formation, provided the framework for the Catholic tradition of healing and mission based on stories in the Scripture. Sr Patricia Talone, a Sister of Mercy and vice-president of mission services, spoke of the integration of social justice into the Church's mission. Bishop Peter Comensoli and Sr Patricia revealed how an understanding and awareness of ethics guidelines can inform decision-making.

David Robinson, Trustee of Mary Aikenhead Ministries, gave a well-received exposition of the development of public juridical persons (PJPs) and the role of the Trustees, with a moving personal reflection on his reason for becoming a Trustee. Fr Gerald Arbuckle SM presented a highly informative and clear exposition of the forms of bullying in the workplace and, consistent with their mission, Catholic agencies' obligations in preventing and dealing with bullying. Associate Professor Charles Burford of Australian Catholic University provided engaging personal insights into how his values were instilled and invited participants to reflect on how values shape leadership practice.

Throughout the two days, participants were encouraged to reflect on Catholic theology, ethics and spirituality. Participants valued the opportunity to discuss and share their experiences and thoughts on how a true understanding of their work as a Catholic ministry transforms and supports their work and personal integrity. Many expressed the desire to extend such programs to others in the Ministries, such as middle management.



Dr Tessa Ho, Trustee – Mary Aikenhead Ministries

A panel comprising Margaret McKenna, principal of Catholic Ladies College, Steven Rubic, CEO of St Vincents & Mater Health Sydney, Fr Arbuckle and Professor Gabrielle McMullen, Trustee, shared their personal stories and reflections on their work with the Ministries.

"The success of the 'A Call to Service' signals a hope that this framework for leadership formation will grow and strengthen, to form the hearts and minds of not only our leaders, but that of all our staff and the people we serve."

Dr Tessa Ho
Trustee – Mary Aikenhead Ministries

A TASMANIAN RETREAT

by Gabrielle McMullen, *Trustee – Mary Aikenhead Ministries*

In 1847 three of the five pioneering Sisters of Charity who had come to Sydney in 1838 went to Hobart at the invitation of Bishop Willson – Sisters Mary John Cahill, Mary de Sales O'Brien and Mary Xavier Williams. The first women religious in Tasmania, they worked among the poor and underprivileged, ministering to prisoners and orphans, giving religious instruction and supervising schools.

This year, the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries held their annual retreat in Hobart and on Friday, 28 – Sunday, 30 October went in the footsteps of the Sisters of Charity to significant places in Hobart where the Sisters had ministered.



The Trustees ventured forth in the rain to visit the graves of the three pioneers and other Sisters of Charity who had died in Hobart

The pilgrimage commenced on Friday morning at the Female Factory, the prison in Hobart where the founding Sisters visited and cared for the inmates as their first ministry exercised in Tasmania.

In the afternoon the Trustees went to Mt Carmel College which was founded in 1942 and conducted by the Sisters of Charity for 55 years. The visit was followed by a period of prayer and reflection, led by the Trustees' spiritual companion, Br Joseph Smith OH, and of getting to know the stories of the three founding Sisters prior to the planned visit next morning to their graves.



The Trustees attend Mass at Wellington Chapel, Cornelian Bay Cemetery

Early Saturday morning the Trustees gathered in Wellington Chapel at Cornelian Bay Cemetery where Archbishop Adrian Doyle of Hobart, celebrated Mass for the Trustees. In his homily he expressed his gratitude to the Sisters of Charity who over the years "brought the Good News of the gospel message to many thousands of children in their schools, and to many patients in their hospitals; they have worked also for those who have been in prison, beginning with the women who were detained in the female prison here in Hobart at the time of their arrival". He commended the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries for their "readiness to serve" in this role and "to ensure that the long and most significant heritage of the Sisters of Charity will continue, admittedly in a new form, but continue nonetheless".



Sr Josephine Cannell rsc



The Most Rev. Archbishop Adrian Doyle of Hobart, Tasmania

Australian story of the Sisters of Charity. The time of prayer and reflection with her was a highlight of the retreat.

The Sisters' original convent in Hobart was attached to St Joseph's Parish Church and Sunday morning saw the Trustees at 9.30am Mass there. The Passionist Fathers now have responsibility for the parish and, after Mass, generously allowed a visit to the former convent, now their monastery. The side chapel to the main altar had direct access to the convent and is where the Sisters of Charity attended Mass. The Sisters formerly conducted an orphanage and school adjacent to the Church and convent.

In the final reflection of the retreat on Sunday morning the Trustees gave thanks for the shoulders of the founding and other Sisters of Charity on which they and all in Mary Aikenhead Ministries stand. It was also an occasion to acknowledge with great gratitude the founding Trustees, three of whom complete their terms on 31 December 2011 – Sisters of Charity Elizabeth Dodds rsc and Linda Ferrington rsc; and Mr Richard Harpham, first Chair of the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries.

After Mass the Trustees ventured forth in the rain to visit the graves of the three pioneers and other Sisters of Charity who had died in Hobart. It was a moving occasion as the Trustees reflected on the Sisters' generous service to the Tasmanian Church, the hardships they faced and the rich heritage built on their foundations.

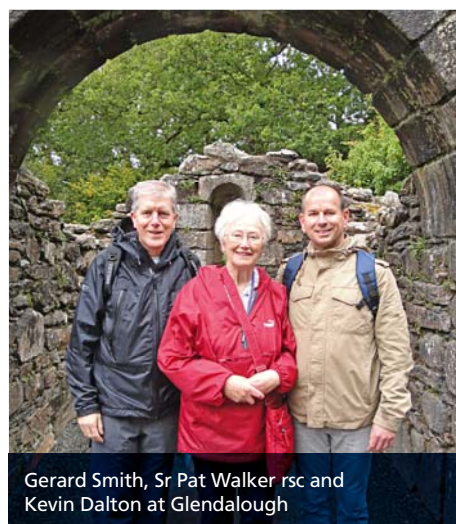
The Trustees gathered on Saturday afternoon with Sr Josephine Cannell rsc, who has written *To the Beckoning Shores: Urged on by the Love of Christ*, a history of the Sisters of Charity in Tasmania and pre-reading for the Trustees' retreat. With over 70 years in the Congregation, Sr Josephine gave us rich insights into the Tasmanian and wider

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MARY AIKENHEAD

by David Robinson, Trustee – Mary Aikenhead Ministries

On 4 September, 18 pilgrims from Mary Aikenhead Ministries arrived in Dublin, Ireland to commence their pilgrimage, *In the Footsteps of Mary Aikenhead*. The pilgrimage provided an opportunity to be immersed in the charism of Mary Aikenhead and the story of the Sisters of Charity. Over the ensuing 8 days the pilgrims were exposed to the life of Mary Aikenhead, the history and charism of the Sisters of Charity, their ministries both in Ireland and overseas, and Ignatian Spirituality. Above all, we experienced overwhelming hospitality from the Sisters of Charity and their ministries.

Whilst there were a number of highlights during the pilgrimage, there are a few experiences that I know all of the pilgrims will hold close to their hearts: the visit to Donnybrook the final resting place of Mary Aikenhead; dinner with the Leadership team cooked by the Congregational Leader Sr Mary Christian RSC; Glendalough, a very sacred and spiritual experience; and the Mary Aikenhead Trails both in Dublin (led by Sr Josephine McDonald) and Cork (led by Sr Miriam Twohig).



Gerard Smith, Sr Pat Walker rsc and Kevin Dalton at Glendalough

DEFINING OUR MISSION

Catholic identity and mission are never static – there must be constant re-engagement with identity and mission as a Catholic agency evolves and as internal and external environments change. As Arbuckle notes in his book *Crafting Catholic Identity in Postmodern Australia* (Canberra: Catholic Health Australia, 2009, pp. 26-27), this is:

a creative process that is an ongoing, never-ending challenge as the conditions around us change ... a process in which people in creating Catholic identity are themselves at the same time transforming both their lives and the world around them.

Thus, the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries have recently worked on a statement defining their mission, informed by the insights of the foundation years of Mary Aikenhead Ministries and the Trustees' interactions with those working across the ministries:

Mary Aikenhead Ministries was established by the Holy See at the request of the Congregation of Religious Sisters of Charity of Australia. On 1 July 2009 education, health and aged care, research and welfare services previously conducted by the Congregation were transferred to Mary Aikenhead Ministries, which was established under Church law as a public juridical person to assume stewardship for their conduct and development. Mary Aikenhead Ministries builds on a rich tradition.

Underpinning Mary Aikenhead Ministries is the commitment of Mary Aikenhead, her sisters and their lay colleagues to care for the poor and disadvantaged, recognising Jesus in each person served by the ministries and seeking to bring His love, tenderness and concern to each of them.

In continuing the mission of Jesus in the spirit and tradition of the Sisters of Charity, Mary Aikenhead Ministries has adopted the values of love, hope, compassion and justice. Those working in the ministries are empowered by the love of Christ which binds us together.

Mary Aikenhead Ministries carries out its activities through the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries. They are the stewards of the works undertaken by the ministries. Through Mary Aikenhead Ministries' governance policies and practices, the Trustees ensure that the works for which they are responsible continue Jesus' mission of healing, teaching and charity in conformity with the teaching, discipline and law of the Catholic Church.

The statement was endorsed by the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries at their Board meeting of 18 October 2011.

CHANGING THE GUARD

On 1 January 2012 the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries will welcome two new Trustees, Sr Helen Clarke rsc and Mr Jim Russell, whose appointments were recently announced by the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity, the sole member of Mary Aikenhead Ministries.

The New Year will also see the retirement of three of the inaugural Trustees, Sr Elizabeth Dodds rsc, Sr Linda Ferrington rsc and Richard Harpham, whose term of appointment will finish on 31 December 2011.

All the current Trustees feel privileged to have been involved in the foundational years of Mary Aikenhead Ministries and are confident that it will continue to flourish.



Sr Elizabeth Dodds rsc, Richard Harpham and Sr Linda Ferrington rsc



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