



JOURNEYS

NEWSLETTER

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A JOURNEY TO THE EMERALD ISLE

All Hallows College, Dublin was the gathering place from which the six Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries, under the leadership of Sister Helen Clarke rsc, commenced their recent Irish pilgrimage. A college of Dublin City University, All Hallows is a real oasis of beautiful trees, gardens and magnificent stone buildings in the busy capital of Dublin. So began our journey in the Emerald Isle – Mary Aikenhead's homeland – a country with so many historical, religious and family ties to Australia.

We were blessed with genuine hospitality and friendship in our journey starting with a visit to The Sanctuary and Focus Ireland in Stanhope Street, Dublin, guided by Sisters Therese and Sile. From here, the work of the Sisters for the poor and neglected in Dublin continues and the Sisters challenge local authorities to improve the lot of the disadvantaged. In Dublin we also spent time at the Mary Aikenhead Heritage Centre, under the guidance of Sr Maria, but more to that later.

The Mary Aikenhead Heritage Centre at Harold's Cross in Dublin was, without doubt, the highlight of our pilgrimage.

A visit to Mary Aikenhead's grave in Donnybrook was a very moving occasion. Prayer and time for reflection in the beautiful surroundings with the graves of countless Sisters nearby, were a reminder of the sacrifices of so many to help less fortunate people – a mission that continues today.

Our journey continued to Glendalough. Ancient ruins and the remains of a cathedral and round tower together with streams and lakes, make this one of Ireland's most attractive areas. The Trustees prayed in the cemetery at this ancient place, where holy man and mystic of the 6th Century, St Kevin is honoured.



Trustees Dr Tessa Ho, Mr Jim Russell, Mr David Robinson, Professor Gabrielle McMullen AM and Sr Helen Clarke rsc with Irish Sisters of Charity in Cork

We then travelled via Waterford (where we visited the Edmund Rice Heritage Centre), to Cork, the next stop in our journey. Cork was a real highlight: Mary Aikenhead's birthplace, her family home and South Chapel where she made her decision to become a Catholic were places of special interest. We were privileged to be led by Sr Miriam on the Mary Aikenhead trail. Our attendance at Sunday Mass at St Vincent's Convent was a significant occasion and the warmth of welcome and hospitality were exceptional. The Sisters care for many disadvantaged women with love and devotion, and the Mass reflected this care. A visit to St Patrick's Hospital concluded our sojourn in Cork.

Our pilgrimage moved via Galway to Foxford, Co. Mayo, where the visit to the Foxford Woollen Mills was a standout. In the 1890s, Sr Arsenius, with great determination and business acumen, saved this town, where others had failed, by opening a woollen mill. The Trustees visited the heritage centre and marvelled at this wonderful story.

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A JOURNEY TO THE EMERALD ISLE

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After a day of rest in Galway, we returned to Dublin for some further memorable visits. We spent time with senior staff at St Vincent's Hospital, a modern first class facility. We also toured Kilmainham Gaol, where Ireland's sad history of 'the troubles' is brought to life. The Sisters of Charity were involved here in prison ministry and this was acknowledged in the Trustees' tour by guide Patrick Mannix, a distant relative of the famous Archbishop Daniel Mannix. In recognition of our collaborations we also visited the Sisters of Mercy International Centre in Baggot Street.



Trustees Ms Rowena McNally, Sr Helen Clarke rsc, Professor Gabrielle McMullen AM, Mr David Robinson, Mr Jim Russell and Dr Tessa Ho in Mary Aikenhead's room in Dublin

I have saved the best till last. The Mary Aikenhead Heritage Centre at Harold's Cross in Dublin was, without doubt, the highlight of our pilgrimage. Standing in Mary's room and seeing the desk, where she penned countless letters to her Sisters, is humbling. Then, noting the wheelchair and simple surroundings from where the great enterprise emerged that is today the Sisters of Charity, gives the pilgrim great pride. The story continues and "The love of Christ impels us."

We are grateful to Sister Helen for making this pilgrimage so special and to the Irish Sisters of Charity for the love and hospitality so freely given.

Jim Russell

Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries

TMAM VISITS VICTOR CHANG INSTITUTE

The Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries held their meeting of 20 June 2013 at the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute (VCCRI) in Darlinghurst. The visit provided an opportunity for the Trustees to receive an update on current research projects and to meet with senior VCCRI staff.

Discussions with Professor Roland Stocker, head of the Vascular Biology Division and Professor Jamie Vandenberg, head of the Cardiac Electrophysiology Laboratory and VCCRI Deputy Director highlighted how discoveries made in the Institute's laboratories are translated into innovative patient treatments.

Gabrielle McMullen AM

Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries



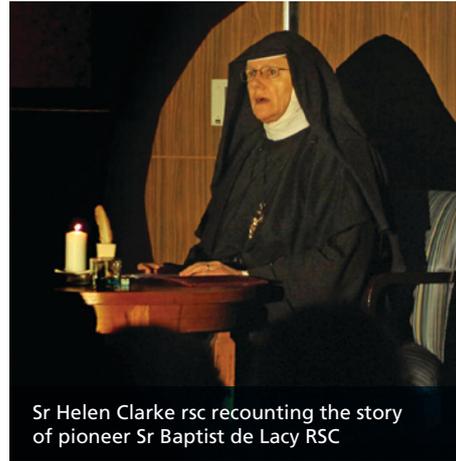
Trustees Mr David Robinson, Professor Gabrielle McMullen AM, Sr Helen Clarke rsc, Ms Rowena McNally and Mr Jim Russell, with Professors Jamie Vandenberg and Roland Stocker at the VCCRI

THE CALL OF THE HEART

MARY AIKENHEAD MINISTRIES ANNUAL CONFERENCE, 2013



Dr Richard Leonard SJ speaking at the conference



Sr Helen Clarke rsc recounting the story of pioneer Sr Baptist de Lacy RSC

The Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries hosted their fourth annual conference entitled *The Call of the Heart* on 18-19 July at Brighton-Le-Sands in Sydney. At the heart of the Trustees' mission lies their commitment to ensuring formation of those serving within Mary Aikenhead Ministries. The Trustees see their annual conference as a significant opportunity to engage in formation with leaders from across the ministries. Two participants, Sr Elizabeth Costigan rsc and Ms Anna Ehler, record their experience of this year's conference:

SR ELIZABETH COSTIGAN RSC
Catholic Ladies College

"Good liturgy should include a welcoming, hospitable community, life-giving music and good preaching" – these are the words of Dr Richard Leonard SJ, the principal presenter at the conference. All of these aspects were present in our opening Eucharist. What a great feeling to be welcomed so warmly by the students of St Vincent's College, to join in singing the hymns, and to be inspired by Mons Tony Doherty's homily and his warm personal connection with the congregation. At the conference dinner we were moved by guest speaker Mr George Sawides who challenged us with his interesting account of his personal involvement with the work of World Vision.

So many inspiring thoughts and reflections were with us as we listened to Richard Leonard opening up for us the conference theme. Relating many personal stories from his family and from his ministry, Richard delivered many gems for us to remember – for example, "God's response to Good Friday is Easter Sunday"; "Be a grateful, forgiving and loving person"; "When we pray, we ask our holy, loving, unchanging God to change us, and thereby change the world" – all these relevant messages gave us food for thought as we reflected on our own "call of the heart".

The Friday afternoon's session consisted of a panel, chaired by Ms Kerry Brettell, and encompassed people from all walks of life responding to the conference theme. This was followed by the appearance of Sr Baptist de Lacy RSC (in the person of Sr Helen Clarke rsc) – she reminded us of the arrival of the first five Sisters of Charity in Sydney on 31 December 1838, and that the Sisters are currently celebrating 175 years in Australia. The concluding ritual sent us forth with these words: "God of unity, send Your blessing upon all gathered here in Your name. May we go forth from this place filled with renewed hope and willing hearts to continue to pray and work for the unity of all Your people."

ANNA EHLER
Mary Aikenhead Education Australia
Advisory Council

"This year's Mary Aikenhead Ministries conference provided a unique opportunity to focus and reflect on how we respond to the "call of the heart" on a day-to-day basis and how we might continue to respond in our various roles within Mary Aikenhead Ministries.

From the inspiring, welcoming Mass, the conference theme continued to be articulated through a range of unique and innovative presentations. With stories that evoked both laughter and tears, keynote speaker Fr Richard Leonard SJ challenged us to rise above the trials we face in carrying out our mission, and to find God in everything we do – by no means an easy task and one that requires much practice!

Other guest speakers and panellists also provided us with food for thought as they shared the ways in which they have heard and responded to the "call of the heart" in their ministries and areas of outreach.

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THE CALL OF THE HEART

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For me a very powerful reminder of the ongoing impact of one "call of the heart" was Sr Helen Clarke's poignant re-enactment of those early years of the Sisters of Charity's ministry in Australia. Against all odds, these courageous women overcame poverty and adversity and ministered to the poor and needy, blazing a trail which has led to Mary Aikenhead Ministries in the 21st Century. While the ministries may look different today, the core values of love, hope, compassion and justice remain as relevant today as they did 175 years ago... and the journey continues.

I am grateful to the Trustees, the conference committee, the presenters and fellow attendees for the opportunity to reflect, dialogue and inspire one another as we continue our work together in response to our "call of the heart."

A COMMITMENT TO RECONCILIATION

In the week preceding Reconciliation Week, Catholic Ladies' College (CLC) welcomed Mrs Vicki Clark from Aboriginal Catholic Ministry to commence the College assembly with a Fire Carrier ceremony, an endorsement of CLC's commitment to Aboriginal reconciliation through education.

The Fire Carrier Project is an initiative of Aboriginal Catholic Ministry and the Opening the Doors Foundation to promote reconciliation in Victorian schools. Four student CLC Reconciliation Group leaders Ruby Martin, Gursimar Kaur, Rachel Peiris and Kate Montgomerie, Reconciliation Group Coordinator Ms Lynn Mason, and Principal Ms Margaret McKenna were commissioned on behalf of the College.

With its focus on spirituality, cultural recognition and awareness, as well as practical reconciliation and justice, the project mirrors not only goals of the Reconciliation Group but of the wider College. The ceremony was simple, yet moving; it captured the connections between Aboriginal and Christian spirituality. All newly commissioned Fire Carriers believe it to be a great privilege to represent the College and to live the mission they are charged with into the future.

Lynn Mason
Reconciliation Coordinator
Catholic Ladies College



2014 SAVE THE DATE ALERTS

1-2 May
Mary Aikenhead Ministries conference, Melbourne

10-20 May
Mary Aikenhead Ministries pilgrimage to Ireland

STAFF UPDATE

The Trustees were pleased to welcome Mr Raff Del Vecchio who joined the office of the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries as Executive Officer on 16 September 2013.

He brings to Mary Aikenhead Ministries extensive managerial and board experience in banking and not-for-profit environments. He has occupied senior manager and department head positions in Citibank and Westpac, and Administrative Services of the Police Association of NSW.

Raff is the current Deputy Chair of the Police Bank and Chair of the Corporate Governance Committee responsible for policy formulation and monitoring, and review of governance. He will work at the Edgecliff office with Ms Michelle Maradin, who has recently re-joined Mary Aikenhead Ministries as Executive Assistant after an eight-month period of leave.



Michelle Maradin and Raff Del Vecchio



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MARY AIKENHEAD MINISTRIES

SUITE 2.01-2.12
LEVEL 2, EDGECLIFF CENTRE
203-233 NEW SOUTH HEAD ROAD
EDGECLIFF, NSW 2027

TELEPHONE 02 9335 5400
FACSIMILE 02 9327 7811

WWW.MARYAIKENHEADMINISTRIES.COM.AU