



JOURNEYS

NEWSLETTER

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COVID-19 continues to cause concern and uncertainty in our community and unfortunately there is no reason to think the worst is behind us. Indeed it is recognised that we will have many more challenges ahead as we deal with this pandemic.

All of us at Mary Aikenhead Ministries are very aware of the specific challenges the pandemic is presenting to our Ministries and the hard work and dedication of those working in those Ministries. We are extremely grateful for what you are doing and our thoughts and prayers are with you.

The courage, care and compassion evident in the Ministries in this unchartered time epitomises the spirit of Mary Aikenhead. She too was familiar with sickness and death on a large scale when the cholera epidemic hit Ireland in 1832 and the great famine in 1845. Let us comfort each other and give comfort to all who are afraid for in the words of Mary Aikenhead:

"Truly we need not fear for we are protected under the shadow of His wings."

I might also share with you some thoughts by a philanthropist which seem very appropriate in these times:

"This virus should remind us that we are all equal regardless of culture, financial situation or how important we think we are. The virus treats us all equally and perhaps we should too. Also, the virus by oppressing us for a short time is a reminder of those in this world whose whole life is spent in oppression."

Richard Haddock AO
Chair
Mary Aikenhead Ministries



*"Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."
(John 12:47)*



*You may not meet me but you know I was here...
then again, you may say 'hello' to me one day*

INSPIRING HOPE AND COMPASSION

In October last year I gathered with staff from St Vincent's Sydney in the park opposite the hospital in Darlinghurst to acknowledge those who experience living with homelessness. There are a number of people from an Indigenous background who live on the Sydney streets and frequent the park. There was a liturgy held and then a shared lunch. I said to one of the staff how fulfilling the time was. She answered me in four words. "We can do more!"

In visiting a couple of Mary Aikenhead colleges I heard one teacher say that the school community wanted 'the girls to be bold' and at another school that the girls acted as 'Eucharist in community.'

I have been privileged to visit a number of St Vincent's aged care facilities and to have sat with Frank who is 92 and to have met Mary, then 91, who had only just come into the care and love of the centre. Frank told me he had lived in his home there for 21 years and hoped to be here a little longer. Mary asked me, "Who is this Mary Aikenhead lady?" After I explained she smiled and said, "Oh, an Irishwoman."

In January this year a friend of mine had a sudden stroke and was taken to St Vincent's emergency. He told me of his hope for a full recovery and shared that the way in which he was cared for gave him increased hope that he would pull through. He has!

So many people place their hope in us. They know there are times we may not be able to achieve all that we would like but they give us their trust and hope in that part of their life's journey. They come with their many questions whether it be in hospitals, aged care, colleges or community. All have their hopes for the future and lean on us at times seeking our time, skills, truth and sincere love to manage those hopes.

These are some of my personal instances and each of us have our own personal stories of people we have met in our journeys through Mary Aikenhead Ministries. I share these moments to express the various hopes we all have for ourselves, for others and the ministries we hold. Each day we are bold in what we do and in our presence as Eucharist in community following our personal journey in the footsteps of Mary Aikenhead and in Christ's shared Vision and Mission. Indeed, we see the face of Jesus in all we meet. We share our hopes in words, a glance and in our actions. When we sit, talk and engage with those about us they inspire hope in us to be better people, to be better at our work and to realise "We can do more!"

Assoc. Prof. Peter Howard
Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries

"Motivated by Jesus' promise of a future that is in loving hands, Mary Aikenhead Ministries trust in the providence of God and seek to provide a wide range of ministries that are beacons of hope."

(Vision, Mission and Values, Mary Aikenhead Ministries, 2020, p. 13)

MARY AIKENHEAD MINISTRIES VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

At the July 2019 Mary Aikenhead Ministries (MAM) conference, sessions were conducted bringing together delegates from all ministries to discuss the Vision, Mission and Values of MAM.

The feedback from those discussions was very important in enabling the Trustees of MAM to confirm its values of Love, Justice, Compassion and Hope.

The Trustees are grateful to all those who contributed.

Copies of the revised MAM Mission, Vision and Values publication are available through our office. An electronic version is also available on our website - [click here to view](#)



VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

MISSIONING CEREMONY OF ST COLUMBA'S COLLEGE BOARD DIRECTORS

Sr Laureen Dixon and I, as Trustees, were attending the Missionary Ceremony of the College's Board Directors for 2020. It was late afternoon on Thursday February 27 when I stood at the College gates of St Columba's. A time to appreciate the garden's beauty, the white roses and the flowering white petunias and the green turf. Time to appreciate the architectural design and beauty of the buildings that surround. A sense of peace and history as I walked through the gates onto the College grounds. It was 5.45pm and a College with no students can be a quiet place but always one full of the Soul and Spirit of past, present and future students, staff and parents.

The next 90 minutes were full of welcome, hospitality, prayer and shared purpose. A shared meal, with the Board Directors - hosted by Rita Grima, Deidre O'Donnell and Malcolm Finger - with time to know a little more of each other. Followed by prayer, a sprinkling of Holy water and blessings for the on-going and new Directors: Deidre O'Donnell, Rosemary Scarlett, Sr Annette Cunliffe, Jenny Ricketts, Patricia Crossin, Anne Young, Tania Briganti, Paul Ould, Angela Agricola and Barbara Doyle. The Holy water being 'a reminder of Baptism

and that you have been called and chosen to live God's message of love into our world.'

All appreciated the 'responsibility and privilege' it is to be a Board Director. People commented on their links to the College, the wisdom and knowledge they have and their willingness to give of themselves for the betterment of the College and particularly the girls. As for Mary Aikenhead the St Columba Board Directors are clearly 'inspired by the vision of Jesus for communities that offer life to the full.'

*Assoc. Prof. Peter Howard
Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries*



STEWARDSHIP VISIT TO ST VINCENT'S CARE SERVICES (SVCS) QLD

I recently visited St Vincent's Care Services in Gympie and Maroochydore.

SVCS Gympie (St Patrick's Villa) offers aged care for up to 30 residents, including low care, high care, palliative care, and dementia care. The facility manager, Ms Leigh Harvey and her team were very welcoming. The stewardship visit included a site tour, meeting various residents in their rooms and at morning tea, a blessing of the staff and an informal discussion regarding the history of Mary Aikenhead Ministries and the role of the trustees. The visit concluded with morning tea with the leadership team.

SVCS in Maroochydore is located in the heart of the Sunshine Coast and can accommodate up to 125 aged care residents. The master-planned community precinct includes SVCS Maroochydore and Stella Maris Catholic Church. The facility manager, Mr Howard Riach and his team were very well prepared. The stewardship visit included a presentation from the team, update from the key portfolio areas (incl. mission), meeting the leadership team, a formal blessing of staff and a discussion regarding the wider activities within Mary Aikenhead Ministries. The visit concluded with a very comprehensive site tour which provided numerous opportunities to meet with residents and see the facility 'in-action'.

*Prof. Michael Drew
Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries*



*Prof. Michael Drew - Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries
with Ms Leigh Harvey - Facility Manager and her team*



*Prof. Michael Drew - Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries
with Mr Howard Riach - Facility Manager and his team*

ST VINCENT'S HOSPITAL MELBOURNE VISIT

"Care (within and) beyond the hospital walls"



If you were walking about, Victoria Pde, Gertrude St or Brunswick St Fitzroy Melbourne in 1893 you would have seen Sisters of Charity in their black habits as they began the establishment of St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne in the vision and values of Mary Aikenhead. So it was in February 2020 I walked these streets keeping in mind the tradition and those who keep evolving the love, care, compassion and justice that has made St Vincent's a leading international hospital, renowned for its emphasis on integrity and excellence. The by-ways, lane ways, carriage driveways, stables, cobblestones and terraces are still there to remind us of a past time.

Little did any of us realise that now in March 2020, less than 4 weeks ago, we all face a challenging pandemic where the values, collegiality and levels of excellence so evident will continue to see St Vincent's as a trusting place of care for the community where Christ's love is present within all that people do. On February 23 I watched a cleaner in the Courtyard going about her job but talking and sharing time with patients as she moved about. There were two security guards showing compassion as they managed the behaviour of a young lady experiencing trauma. At the same time a team of staff, nurses and a doctor, sitting and sharing time with a patient as she lay in her bed soaking up some sun next to the bust of St Vincent de Paul. All were showing the Spirit and



Purpose of St Vincent's Melbourne established since 1893 and of the charism and prayer brought to Australia by the Sisters of Charity in 1838. Then I spied the beauty of a bloom that reinforced the joy we all share in a flower - a gift of peace and joy - and a reminder of what nature has to offer.

With no words or guide I wandered in my prayerful pilgrimage about Fitzroy. Becoming more aware of the memories, the re-invention, the re-ignoration and the vision expressed. I was in the midst of research Institutes, the public hospital, the private hospital, Rosehill Terraces, the Foundation and the Chapel. I learnt and read a little about Sr Francesca Healy and of an Irish St Erin from Kildare Ireland. I appreciated what I had seen – the beauty in people, the joys of nature and the people stories across the decades in the buildings...truly, Christ in community! To be a small part of all of this is a privilege, my personal journey shaped by providence.

"People who don't fit in anywhere else."

The next two days at St Vincent's Melbourne reinforced for me the presence of Christ's loving vision in all of Mary Aikenhead Ministries within communities. Providing excellence in health care, being interventionist, establishing palliative care for the homeless, ageing, the role of tele-health, addressing the mental health of people, acknowledging our obligation to be inclusive of all, providing a refuge for those who have nowhere else to call home, supporting those incarcerated in their time of health need, investigating transition pathways from discharge to a home rather than homelessness and strengthening relationships and trust with Indigenous communities.



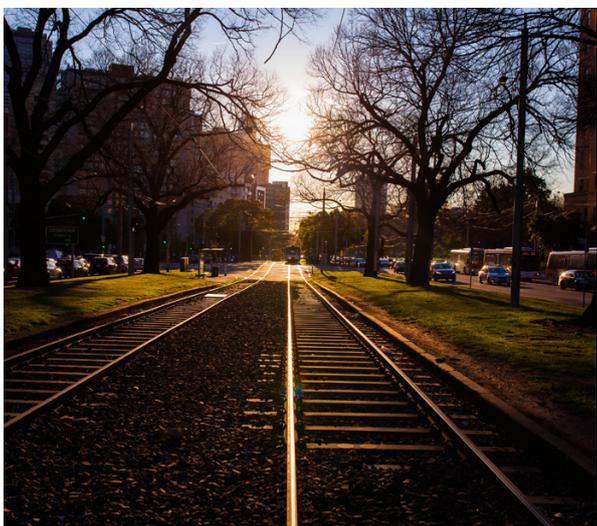
"We don't turn people away."

There is an explicit focus on 'keeping the person at the core'. New considerations for health care related to community issues are evolving related to domestic / family violence, outreach palliative care, isolation and loneliness, information technology for distant communities, mental health-drug-alcohol complexities in peoples' lives, post-prison support, inter-agency partnerships, homelessness, diversity of patient language backgrounds and Indigenous community based health. There continues to be ongoing and evolving questioning of practice, research and scholarship to ensure excellence and a value based approach is maintained.



"Indigenous social and emotional well-being in a western health system."

As I met and chatted with staff, patients and those who place their trust in St Vincent's there was a sense of pride in the staff's skills and knowledge, their cohesion, commitment and love of people so evident. There is Christ's presence in the staff, and Christ's Mission enacted with people founded and continuing with the heritage of the Sisters of Charity and the expressed values of Mary Aikenhead Ministries. Around the corner from St Vincent's Hospital in Brunswick St is Mononia House convent to the Sisters of Charity, Fitzroy. On Monday February 24, I dropped in to wish Sr Josephine a Happy 102nd Birthday and met up with other Sisters to say thanks and share Christ's blessing.



Thanks to all who supported my time at St Vincent's Melbourne in welcoming me, in continuing my formation journey and in praying with me:

- Angela Nolan, Margaret Stewart, Anna McFadgen, Lisa McDonald, John Willis, Clinton Cummins and Deborah Goodman, along with,
- Homeless Healthcare team (Louise, Andrew, Cecilia, Lena, and Paul),
- Aboriginal Healthcare Co-ordination and Palliative Care (Nicola, Niamh and Lisa),
- Those involved in Screening for complex psychological presentations in Emergency Department (Aleshia, Kendra and Andrew),
- Aboriginal Health and Employment Teams (Toni, Emma, Ruby, Chris)
- Correctional Health – St Augustine's ward (Julie and Stephen)
- Aged care and the Homeless at Prague House (Tina)
- Addiction Medicine – de Paul House (Jenelle, Yvonne and Brigid)
- Fr Zaher Mhanna who shared from his heart in the Ash Wednesday Mass which he celebrated in the hospital Chapel.

"Mary Aikenhead Ministries is inspired by the vision of Jesus for communities that offer life to the full. We are committed to loving service of all people, especially those who are poor, marginalised and vulnerable."

[Assoc. Prof. Peter Howard](#)

Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries



HOBART PILGRIMAGE

In March I joined fellow pilgrims in Hobart. I feel very fortunate to have met with people from our health and education ministries, and to benefit from hearing the many and colourful stories shared by Sr Maria Wheeler.

The founding story of the Irish sisters arriving in Sydney and later Hobart is a truly inspirational one. The hardships endured and the courage and tenacity the Sister's demonstrated in assisting the poor, the sick, and the dying is remarkable to say the least.

A visit to the Cascades Female Factory and learning about the Sisters' ministry there including the horrific conditions the prisoners and their children endured, cements the thought that these three women must have truly been inspired and nourished by a higher power. I stand in awe of what these early pioneering women achieved in their lives and brought to our country and community through the continued works of the Sisters of Charity.

I feel blessed to be working in an organisation that holds such a rich and moving history and one which continues to inspire all of us today through a shared mission and vision – to love others, to always hold hope, to be compassionate, to seek justice and to help the poor and vulnerable.

Ms Angela Thomas

Operations Manager, Mary Aikenhead Ministries



Pilgrims at St Aloysius College, Kingston



Pilgrims at Mt Carmel College, Sandy Bay



Pilgrims picking pears from a pear tree which was saved from the original orchard on the site of Mt Carmel College, Sandy Bay



Pilgrims reading about convict life at the Footsteps to Freedom statues on Macquarie Wharf



A re-enactment of prisoners locked in the tiny crime yard cells of the Cascades Female Factory



Pilgrims gathered around the resting place of the three Sisters of Charity - Mother Mary John Cahill, Sr Francis de Sales O'Brien, Sr Francis Xavier Williams

MISSION & FORMATION

The mission of MAM is grounded in sacred scripture and rooted in the great traditions of the Catholic Church and the rich heritage of the Sisters of Charity. The mission and ministry of Jesus Christ is to bring the “good news” of God’s reign to all people – He came to “bring the good news to the poor, to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free.” (Luke 4:6-21)

Leadership Formation Framework: Formation of the Heart. Mary Aikenhead Ministries.

In mid-February, I facilitated a formation session for the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries. The value of **HOPE** was the focus, with exploration of how this value is understood, interpreted and informs the stewardship of Mary Aikenhead Ministries.

The session began with the scripture selected for the MAM Vision, Mission and Values: **‘Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.’** (John 14:27). There was discussion of how this quote sits within the discourse of John’s gospel. The Trustees noted Jesus’ preparation of the disciples for his departure, the presence of the Holy Spirit and Jesus’ encouragement in the providence of God, all contributing to **Christian Hope**.

The Trustees were presented with a choice of chronological vignettes from the heritage and story of the Sisters of Charity and invited to consider how the value of **Hope** was given expression in each one.

The vignettes included:

1. Mary Aikenhead and the foundation of the congregation.
2. The Australian Mission circa 1838 and early years.
3. Agnes Morrogh - Bernard and Foxford, Ireland
4. Former Congregational Leaders’ speeches: Annette Cunliffe rsc 2002, Elizabeth Dodds rsc 2005, 2007.

Throughout these stories, the Trustees identified the traits of courage, service, acceptance, loss, creativity and a commonly held practical determination, together with the loving care of God as the central drivers of hope in each vignette. In essence, it was the Sisters’ faith, commitment and their enduring hope in the God of Easter that impacted the Trustees.

The Trustees’ discernment considered how the richness of the story and the **Hope of the Resurrection** continues to guide their stewardship and leadership of Mary Aikenhead Ministries at this time.

In the privilege of developing this Trustee Formation, I came to recognise the extraordinary depth and variety of formation opportunities within the MAM Vision, Mission and Values Statement.

[Ms Margaret McKenna](#)

MAEA Mission Development Coordinator



The Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries with Ms Margaret McKenna - MAEA Mission Development Coordinator

CHAPTER PRAYER 2020

The Trustees would like to extend their support and prayers to the Sisters of Charity Chapter meetings. Please find below a copy of the Sister's prayer.

Ever creating God, your encompassing Spirit invites us into your love, your mystery, your generosity and your yearning for our world.

Your providence has guided us to this moment. We give you thanks for all that has been and for all that awaits us.

We pray that each Sister of Charity will be courageous, honest and generous in listening to your spirit, who continues to guide us, so that we can bring your love into our world.

We unite with our sisters and brothers throughout the world:

Those who live in freedom, those struggling for freedom,
Those who eat and are satisfied, those who are malnourished and underfed,
Those who care for our planet, those who pillage and destroy our earth,
Those who have more than enough, those who have little or nothing,
Those who live and work on the land, those who have no land,
Those who are chronically ill, those without access to healthcare and medication,
Those who are abused, those who work for justice,
Those who....
Those who....

May our 28th General Chapter be a time of challenge and renewal. May we see, hear and respond to all that you are calling us to be in this time of great change in our world and in our church. As we live under the shadow of your wings, may our hearts be open, our minds enlarged and our spirits inspired.

Providence is within us,
Providence will continue to shine a light upon us,
Providence will take us to where God is leading us.

Venerable Mary Aikenhead, pray for us
Amen



The Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries are pleased to announce that the TMAM Conference will be held in **Sydney** on **5-6 August 2021**.

The conference is the primary formation activity conducted by the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries for leaders of their health, education, research, aged care and outreach ministries.



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