



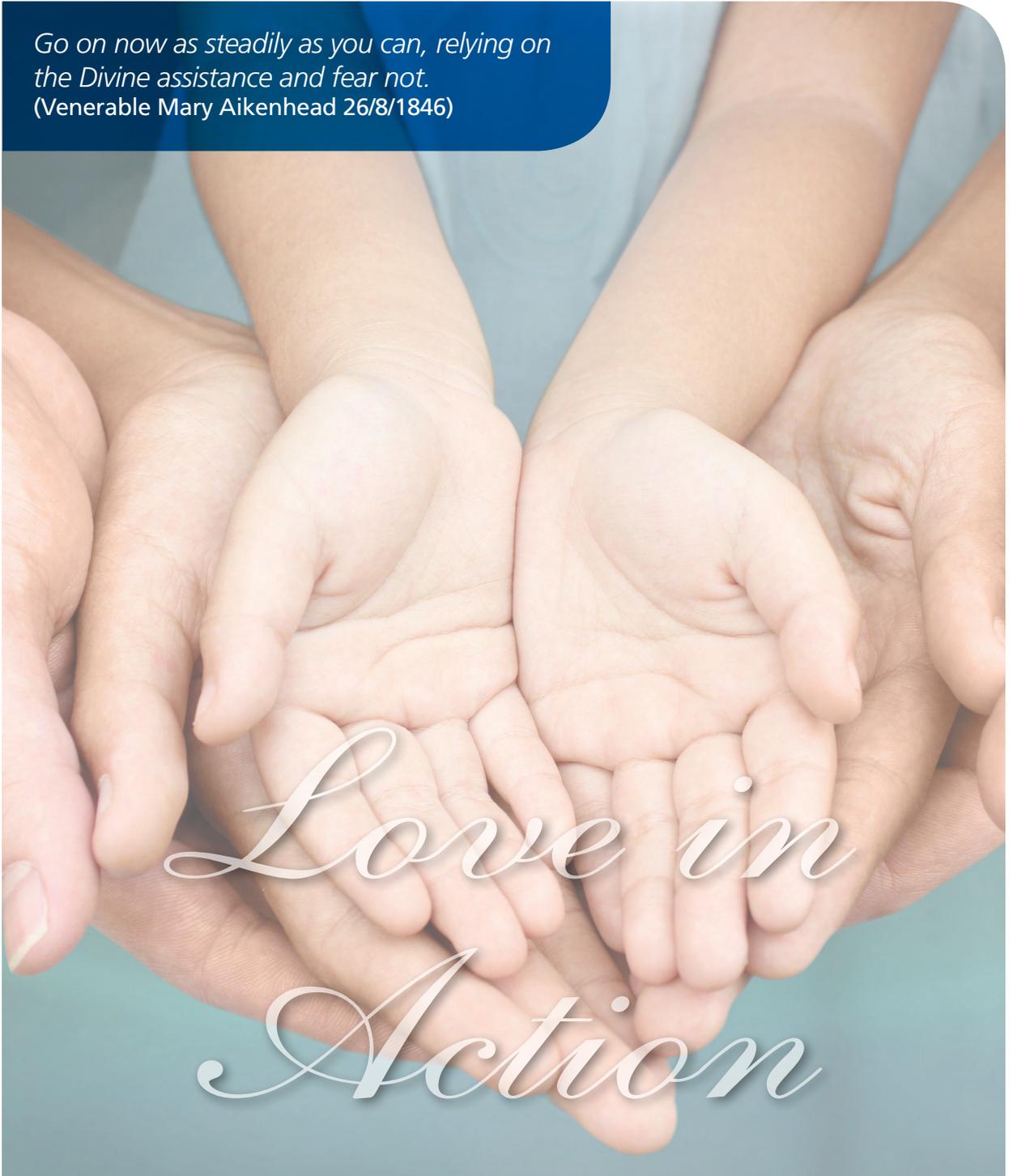
MARY AIKENHEAD MINISTRIES

JOURNEYS

NEWSLETTER

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*Go on now as steadily as you can, relying on
the Divine assistance and fear not.
(Venerable Mary Aikenhead 26/8/1846)*



*Love in
Action*

*Take all due care of your own health and that of others, and may our
Heavenly Father give His own blessing. (Venerable Mary Aikenhead 6/12/1854)*

LOVE

RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF OUR TIMES

Love: a word freely used in our society to cover a range of human emotions and actions; a powerful word which can motivate and inspire beyond even our own expectations.

However, the word on its own is not enough and actions must follow. Love is one of the foundations upon which Venerable Mary Aikenhead acted and which she exhorted all of her followers to also enact.

Our Vision, Mission and Values document released in 2019 includes the following on Love:

"At Mary Aikenhead Ministries we seek to express the unconditional love of Jesus Christ as the primary motivator and basic character that defines all our ministries and guides our actions. Love lies at the heart of all human relationships which are ultimately life-giving and sustaining.

Thus, our ministries seek to be places of loving care where the dignity of all is recognised and where the human spirit is nurtured."

[click here to view](#)

The examples included in this edition of Journeys are snapshots of the many ways you, in our diverse Ministries, are enacting our value of Love as you respond so magnificently to the challenges firstly of the bushfires and now of COVID-19.

Because of the nature of the works included here, many behind the scenes people are not highlighted: our laundries, ICT, catering, cleaning, security, volunteers, drivers, media, finance, front office.... the list is endless. It includes those who support you at home and so strengthen your ability to act. It is the combined efforts of all in our hospitals, aged care, social services and schools which have enabled our response. You have lived active Love in the service of the poor, vulnerable, sick, anxious, girls needing an education and emotional support, those escaping domestic abuse and homelessness. You have helped our nation respond and made our society stronger.



COVID-19 clinic set up to assist people experiencing homelessness



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One of the great joys and blessings for me these last weeks has been listening to the Compassion, Courage and Consolation podcast so beautifully compiled by Dr Dan Fleming with contributions from many across our ministries. As I have listened to the exploration of the theme in each episode I have felt humbled by the love, faith and devotion so willingly shared.

Whilst the focus of the podcasts has been on health and aged care, a recent special episode also profiled the love, faith and devotion of staff and students at St Columba's College, which has been reflected around our education ministries.

These examples have reminded me that we are part of the Marian tradition of our faith and are tangible, contemporary examples of you saying Yes! Just as Mary said Yes! to God in bearing and raising Jesus.

Probably there have been and will be many times when you wish that Mary Aikenhead's words "**Truly love will make labour light.**" (11/07/1840) were more of a reality for you. It is those moments when Love truly shines through.

As Trustees, we thank you, we applaud you and we assure you of our prayers. I remain in awe of your work and share with you below some inspiring stories of hope, love and compassion from our ministries.

Ms Janet Freeman

Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries



Online anxiety service "This way up" helping people through the coronavirus pandemic



[click here to view](#)

Deltra Goodrem International Nurses Day 2020



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St Vincent's College

'The most amazing experience in all this has been how staff have come together to collaborate. We have overcome the isolation by really supporting each other. What I want to tell you is that we were at a loss as a community so involved in hands-on outreach, when all our activities shut down one after the other. We all wanted to DO something.

We got together with St Canice's kitchen, put a call out to our school community that they were desperate for funds. They needed to fund their bathrooms, take-away service and pop-up health centre for the homeless which had to be closed because they couldn't follow protocols.

The St Vincent's Community joined forces with the parish community and donations from both rolled in. Do you know in the first hour after I sent an email to our community the total had reached \$8,000 and in three days it was over \$48,000. It's still going up.

St Canice's got their COVID-19 response program up and running in record time and our community felt they'd really made a difference.

How lucky am I and how inadequate to the task the Lord has put before us?'

Ms Jo Kenderes

*Director of Faith and Mission
St Vincent's College Sydney, NSW*

Ms Jo Kenderes speaking about Outreach's response to COVID-19



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st Columba's College

'Continuing the theme of service, students' families and staff have been busy with their sewing machines, whilst learning from home. In a call for help from the Footscray SVDP Conference, who continued operating their Soup Van during these challenging times – we were asked if we could sew reusable bags to assist them in hamper deliveries. This great activity was led by the Student Leadership Coordinator and Justice Leader working with student leaders and justice groups - with so many people offering their help as we continue to be God's loving presence in our world.'

Mr Shane Taylor

*Head of Faith and Mission
St Columba's College Essendon, VIC*



Catholic Ladies' College

'What has been touching is seeing that the phrase 'staying apart is keeping us together' alive and celebrated. We have staff running online lunchtime activities for the students in exercise/dance/music/aerobics and social interest group meets. It has been amazing how adaptable and willing staff have been to undertake changed roles and ensure the best offerings for all students. Personally, one of the most valuable experiences to come out of this is the importance and affirmation of community and the support and solidarity in sharing with others.'

Mr Frank Salmic

*Faith and Mission Leader
Catholic Ladies' College Eltham, VIC*

Ms Debbie Brock speaking about students' home learning during COVID-19



[click here to view](#)



MT ST MICHAEL'S COLLEGE

UNDER THE STEWARDSHIP OF
MARY AIKENHEAD MINISTRIES

'The work of the Student Community Action groups has continued, as the teacher leaders of each group have engaged and reached out to the students across the various year levels. Students are preparing remotely for their action when they return to school. We have also continued to provide practical support to our local St Vincent De Paul Conference through donations of toiletries and food for those in need.'

Mr Stephen Campion

*Deputy Principal Faith and Mission
Mt St Michael's College Ashgrove, QLD*

Students speak about their experiences during the COVID-19 isolation and learning from home in light of the notions of love and community.



[click here to view](#)

LOVE COMING TO LIFE

“Love coming to life” is how the great Sr Maryanne Confoy reflects on the work of our people all across St Vincent’s in the first episode of Compassion, Courage, Consolation: Voices for St Vincent’s During COVID-19.

As I got ready to dial Sr Maryanne in from a spare room at home – a room that no one ever dreamed would become a makeshift studio - I had a moment to pause and reflect.

This wasn’t the Podcast the Mission team at St Vincent’s had planned. Recognising the incredible people who work in our services, back in January we’d decided to record a series profiling our staff and how – through their unique gifts, efforts, and their love for their work and those they serve – they are integral to the St Vincent’s story, and the advancement our Mission.

As the full extent of the pandemic and the impact on our services became clear, we quickly recognised that those very same staff who we planned to interview were going to be called upon to endure in offering their gifts, efforts, and love in service of those we care for and each other in extraordinary times.

What could we do to support them?

The word ‘love’ is used three times in the intro to Compassion, Courage, Consolation, a podcast in which we talk to people “who love St Vincent’s, love our staff, and love the service we provide in health and aged care.” These words capture the goals we wanted to achieve in our re-purposed podcast: as our people face this extraordinary set of challenges, let’s bring them some voices of those who love and appreciate them, and who can encourage them to endure in loving their work and those they serve in challenging times.

Compassion, Courage and Consolation are framing themes which help to identify what this love looks like as it comes to life at this time. Back to Sr Maryanne:

Mary Aikenhead began to see with new eyes the people around her. The poor, the suffering, the people who are marginalized. The people who nobody else saw. And that was love coming to life in her. And that’s what happens in every one of our St Vincent’s facilities: Love coming to life.

Listening through the nearly twenty episodes of the podcast so far one gets a very deep appreciation of the reality that Sr Maryanne reflects on here. Whether an episode features a doctor or nurse, an executive or a pastoral carer, a manager of food services or a manager of homeless health, a mission leader or a past patient, it’s very clear that love is a central disposition at St Vincent’s, and that it’s been coming to life in very special ways over the past few months.

That love includes both eyes to see the dignity of all we serve as well as each other, and the will to respond. It’s given rise to enormous creativity and generosity, not to mention incredible expressions of the Mission, some of which are included in this edition of Journeys. In a special episode which features a student and staff member of St Columba’s College, Essendon, it’s clear that this same charism lives in the education ministries too.

And this gets to the heart of my reflection on Compassion, Courage, Consolation. It’s been something like an unfolding diary of “love coming to life” during COVID-19 – its authors the many people who have been interviewed so far. Extraordinary as these reflections are, the most wonderful insight is that they’re not extraordinary at all. Love has always been coming to life across the ministries – it’s an ordinary feature of who we are. It’s more obvious when we’re in this challenging chapter of our history, but it’s always been there. And that’s what makes it love (not merely a sentiment or a passing fad) – because it’s that same disposition that we see coming to life again and again in the history of the ministries, from 1838 until today.

[Dr Dan Fleming](#)

*Group Manager, Ethics and Formation
St Vincent’s Health Australia*

You can tune in by searching for *Compassion, Courage, Consolation* wherever you find your podcasts.

OPEN SUPPORT: 30 YEARS OF MISSION IN ACTION

Celebrating an anniversary in the midst of a pandemic can be unsettling. But it can also be truly inspiring. I believe this is the case for Open Support. Drawing on 30 years of experience, meeting the needs of our time, Open Support knew how to read the signs of these difficult times and act on it.

The birth of Open Support in 1990 is intertwined with the story of St Vincent's Clinic. I was part of the Congregation Leadership team as the Vicar at the time. A group of visionary doctors approached us with a unique request to build a multidisciplinary clinic. Our then Congregational Leader, Sr Mary Maguire, argued that everything we do needs to be apostolic work, a ministry that reaches out to the poor and the marginalised. This is how, with the birth of St Vincent's Clinic, came a sine qua non condition: the creation of an organisation within the Clinic that would fulfil this mission. Sisters of Charity Outreach, now called Open Support, officially opened on 25 September 1990.

This was a very exciting, albeit anxious time. We were looking at new, creative ways to carry out our mission. Slowly but surely, our organisation started to develop and became a real hub for support. Like Sister Mary Maguire had envisioned, it became a place where people could be listened to and counselled, where country people would feel valued and cared for, and where women could be supported and protected.

It has been a wonderful place to be part of. One of the most remembered experiences for me as Co-Executive Director was the richness and importance of Volunteers. They were the gems that carried our vision out into the community. In addressing unmet social needs through three

decades, the organisation has kept on evolving. Change is always difficult, but it is at the heart of Open Support's mission: reading the signs of the time, and responding to them. This cannot be achieved without change. When the Sisters of Charity transferred to Mary Aikenhead Ministries and we handed over the organisation to lay leadership, it became Open Support. Despite a different name and different times, there is one thing that did not change: the outstanding commitment to the mission. The latest proof of that is how Open Support has reacted to COVID-19.

It shows that no matter what, the organisation keeps on meeting those needs. The way the team has adjusted, working tirelessly to support women affected by domestic violence, people in regional areas and those who are socially isolated through the crisis, is magnificent. When I see how Open Support has increased their support to more women impacted by domestic violence, and moved up from 130 clients to connecting with 400 people on a weekly basis by having a little conversation, caring about their wellbeing and offering some social connection, I find it fantastic. I know what that phone call means. Seeing where Open Support is today, I would say the Sisters of Charity would congratulate each and everyone; volunteers, staff, leadership, in taking action, and always with this underlying mantra "what more can we do?" attitude. When Sr Mary Maguire proclaimed 30 years ago these prophetic words "No outreach, no Clinic", it became clear with time that what Sr Mary Maguire wanted for the disadvantaged and poor has come to fruition.

Sr Clare Nolan
Congregational Leader, Sisters of Charity

www.opensupport.org.au

Lonely
Through the crisis

We were here for them

Still Lonely
After the crisis

We will still be here

LONELINESS DOES NOT END AFTER LOCK-DOWN

At least not for everyone.

Only with your help can we still be here for them.

Support those who continue to be lonely and alone

opensupport.org.au/donate-today

TRUSTEE REFLECTIONS ONE YEAR ON...

"It matters not what we are doing for God provided we are doing it in the best possible way."
Venerable Mary Aikenhead

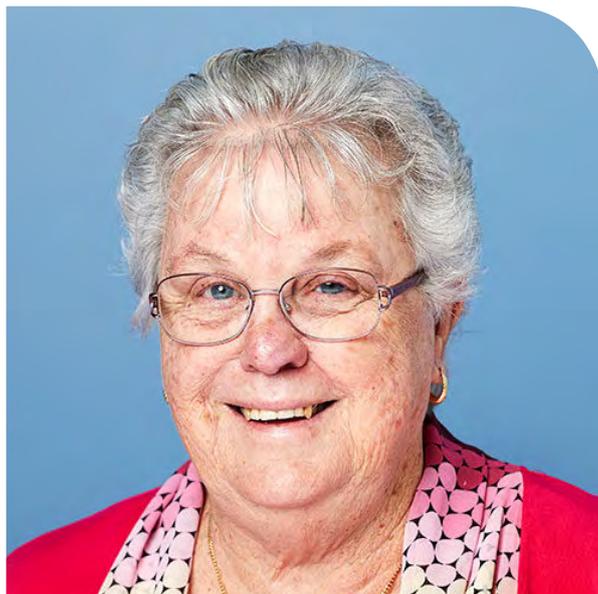
This saying of Mary Aikenhead often comes to mind for me. How true when I began my role as a Trustee of Mary Aikenhead Ministries in May 2019. I previously had a role of Governance within our Congregation so had some sense of what to expect. As I adjusted to this new Trustee role, I quickly realised that preparing for our monthly meetings required much dedicated time to absorb and understand the challenges and issues being presented to us.

The first few months brought many challenges to the Trustee group given the changes in personnel and the subsequent adaptations.

Now in 2020, the changes and demands have escalated with the threat of COVID-19. I stand in awe of everyone in all our ministries as they so generously respond to the challenges of this dreadful virus on a day by day basis.

I feel confident that Mary Aikenhead would be very proud as she sees the values of Love, Justice, Compassion and Hope given a deeper expression in the ministries which bear her name.

It is with pride that I thank and congratulate everyone for a superb effort and assure you that you are prayed for daily.



Let these words of Mary Aikenhead continue to inspire you:

"How truly it is by miracles of Almighty Providence that our endeavours have always been blessed."

Lauren Dixon rsc
Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries

"I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life."
(John 14:6)

To arrive at this time and place in my life's journey... Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries, a time to pause and consider. The meeting of new people, praying together, sharing in time and conversation, being in each other's presence, having a meal and a cuppa, learning more about myself, discerning on decisions to be made and actions taken, and, now, entering a deepening time of love and care for one another. There have been many meetings timetabled, events attended and the organisational complexity appreciated. BUT always the people, the Spirit, faith, humour, being Australian and Baptism are present in this journey - in my ongoing Formation with Mission. In quiet times and in prayer we are guided by a Spirit, we are Australian in the ways we support one other - as mates - and with Baptism we take on a personal responsibility to accompany the sick, poor and vulnerable.

To be wrapped in an explicit value-based and faith-based community, to be part of a rich heritage and tradition evolving to meet peoples' needs in this time is a gift of grace.



Thanks to all for your kindness as the journey continues. As a dear Sister said, "I keep you all in my prayer list."

Assoc. Prof. Peter Howard
Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries

There are two conversations over the past year that have proved particularly formative given the challenges of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that we face today. When the Sisters of Charity extended an invitation to join Mary Aikenhead Ministries as a trustee, Sr Clare Nolan challenged us to always respond to the needs of the times. And, at our ten year conference, Sr Elizabeth Dodds reminded with me that while trustees must rush to be with Our Lord's poor, marginalised, and vulnerable; we should also pray for the grace to sit quietly and listen to their wisdom. So why are these two conversations so important for us today? High levels of unemployment, outbreaks of cholera, and the great famine were the prevailing headwinds facing Venerable Mary Aikenhead as she founded her new Congregation.

Mother Mary saw the needs of her time; she listened; she prayed, and she, with her Sisters, acted. The times in which we find ourselves compel us to witness the Gospel in a most practical way, through our commitment to the values of Love, Justice, Compassion and Hope. Today, perhaps more than any other time this century, requires our ministries to be places of loving care, where the dignity of all is recognised and where the human spirit is nurtured. And, finally, to all those who serve in our various



ministries, we offer our heartfelt thanks, prayers, and admiration every day, but especially during these difficult days. You are the best of Mary Aikenhead Ministries.

Prof. Michael Drew
Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries

1 May 2019 looked nothing like 1 May 2020 on many levels.

In being asked to reflect on my first twelve months as a Trustee, I could say it has been a journey - a journey of acquiring knowledge and understanding.

However, this only touches the surface of my experience. While I may have undertaken a big journey, what I have seen over the past year shows that the change in times wrought by COVID-19 is a short journey for all the people spread throughout our Ministries. Every visit I have made to work over the last 12 months provides endless evidence of deeply genuine and caring people inspired by the history and works of the Sisters of Charity and their faith.

What our faith shows us matters in times of challenge - where there is uncertainty, change and limits all around us - is that our essential character will be revealed. And here we see that our character is our shared mission, starting right from Mary Aikenhead herself, to see with love the dignity of each human person.

So my answer is 1 May 2020 brought me to a place of awe, deep respect and honour for all the people



in our Ministries. This admiration grows as I see our people demonstrate every day, as they have always done, that they bring the love of God to all.

Ms Penelope Wright
Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries



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