



# JOURNEYS

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 15 | ISSUE 3 | SEPTEMBER 2021

## COMPASSION

*'The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.'*  
**James 5:11**

Happy, wholesome, meaningful loving is not provided by the material things we have and work to accumulate. Rather by the relationships and interactions we have in our lives and the values of Jesus by which we live. Compassion being one. Thus, 'Clothe yourself with compassion, generosity, humility, gentleness and patience.' (Colossians 3:12)

In seeking a meaning for the word compassion one finds 'a sympathetic concern for the suffering of others', though as one encounters and engages with others it means much more. Compassion involves connecting with, listening to and showing one's feelings and emotions with others. At times, not easy. Often you need to show your inner self and that can make you feel vulnerable whilst at the same time bringing love and care to others and one's self.

The personal connection that each of us brings to a situation whether we know the other personally or if that person is a stranger reflects our humanity. When we give of ourselves in a journey with others we express our compassion, our love and concern. We are bringing forward Christ's compassion, love and mercy as witnessed in our 'mind think', our words, support and actions.

For us all, there have been times in our personal journeys when others show us their compassion and it is these times that reinforce for us the importance of showing compassion to others.

'Each and everyone's existence is deeply tied to that of others. Life is not merely passing by. Life is about interactions. We all need each other, none of us is an island, an autonomous and independent 'I' separated from the other, including everyone.'  
(Pope Francis, 26 April 2017)

# COMPASSION

Compassion is a lovely word. It includes passion... the Passion of Christ perhaps...doing, loving and caring for others with a passion. Then the word compass...perhaps setting our personal compass in a set direction, choosing the right pathway to take, the right action to undertake.

In 1833 Venerable Mary Aikenhead set the compass of the Mission for the Sisters of Charity and for Mary Aikenhead Ministries...‘to attend to the comforts of the poor, both spiritual and temporal, to visit them at their dwellings and in hospitals, to attend them in sickness, to administer consolation in their afflictions, and to reconcile them...to an all-wise providence in the many trials to which they are subject.’ (Donnelly, 1911)

There is the time that Mary with Catherine sat in a Dublin prison, frequently and willingly, with two condemned women bringing friendship and peace. Showing Christ’s love in their actions and their presence, ‘for you had compassion for those who were in prison.’ (Hebrews 10:34)

People, no matter their age, or their place in this world can be imprisoned in many ways - in their mind, through their body and prison itself. Across the health, aged care, education and community service Ministries we sit, listen and journey with others bringing comfort often in unexpected ways. In welcoming the poor, the poor of Spirit, the homeless, the sick, the unemployed, the refugee, the lonely, the migrant, the child, the elderly and one another we bring Christ’s presence. We give a message of connection, a sense of belonging, a value of worth, hope, and friendship.

Each day there are moments each of us can act compassionately in...

Motivating others ...

Doing a loving act of kindness ...

Making a telephone call ...

Sending a text of care and thoughtfulness ...

Saying an encouraging word ...

Lending a hand ...

Sharing a prayer ...

Offering to help ...

Being there ...

Giving a caring smile ...

Listening truly to one another ...

Accepting the unexpected ...

On April 22, 2021 Enid Hampshire (99 yrs) journeyed to heaven from St Vincent’s Public Hospital, Sydney. Enid is the loving Mother of my dear friend Anne. Enid’s presence at St Vincent’s, in her short stay, gave opportunity, for, at least, three loving acts of compassion. All taken.

A day before Enid’s death a lady, a stranger, in an opposite bed received a bunch of flowers. The lady’s daughter came to Anne and said, ‘mum and I think we know what is happening, would your mum like these flowers?’ That night, as Anne and brothers said a good night, a St Vincent’s nurse lovingly said, ‘We’ll care for your mum.’

The following morning when Anne arrived to say farewell to her mum she found that a St Vincent’s staff had placed a bunch of roses with her mum. Enid loved family, God and people...and ice cream. Her gift and presence at St Vincent’s gave opportunity to meaningful acts of compassion and love for all.

Such opportunities happen each day in our lives and such acts of compassion are seen throughout Mary Aikenhead Ministries. Christ’s compassion is one of the values by which the Ministries are known...it’s in our DNA! Let us continue to be open to the moments...‘put on then, as God’s children, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness and patience, bearing with one another and if one has a complaint against another, forgive each other.’ (Colossians 3, 12-13)

In acknowledgement of all staff and those associated with Mary Aikenhead Ministries who each day take time to show compassion to others, God bless.

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



# MARY AIKENHEAD FEAST DAY



July 22 was the 163rd anniversary of the death of Venerable Mary Aikenhead. We Sisters of Charity gathered with the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries and our staff, board and committee members, and companions in Sydney and Melbourne to celebrate this woman in whose name we are called to loving service of God's poor.

Our gathering was via zoom given the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions and the invitation was to a virtual morning tea, bringing your own cupcake.

Initially, we spent time in small groups, sharing 'our cupcakes' and the inspiration of Mary Aikenhead's life. This rich conversation led into a time of formal prayer.

The prayer invited us to contemplate our personal story and Mary Aikenhead's story within the context of the great cosmic story, with the scripture reference, 'in the beginning was the word'.

Mary's story of outreach and response to those in need remains dynamic for us as we continue to create our story within the Australian context today. To assist us in deepening this aspect we drew from our 2021 Chapter Direction statement and sayings of Mary Aikenhead.

We were left pondering our contribution to writing this ongoing story knowing that 'in the beginning was the word...'

At 5am on Friday July 23, we joined our sister Congregation gathering via zoom in the places where sisters minister: Zambia, Nigeria, Malawi, Scotland, England, California, Ireland, and Australia. This was a particularly moving time of prayer during which we recalled the sisters who had died since last July 22 as each was named and her image shown.

We were then taken virtually to Mary Aikenhead's grave in Donnybrook and given time to pray silently.

Each celebration was gift of praise to God for this woman.

Laureen Dixon rsc  
*Congregational Leader, Sisters of Charity of Australia*

## ST VINCENT'S HOSPITAL LISMORE

Sister Clare Nolan, Sister Deirdre Hickey, my wife Kerry and I, had the great privilege to attend the centenary celebrations of St Vincent's Hospital Lismore on 11 June 2021.

For Sister Clare, who had two 'tours of duty' with St Vincent's hospital Lismore in the 1970's, it was a wonderful opportunity to walk the halls of the hospital, recall so many loving memories, and catch up with colleagues.

At both the gala dinner on Friday night (June 11, 2021) and the magnificent mass on Saturday morning, the Sisters of Charity in general and Sister Clare in particular, were affectionately remembered and highly praised for bringing the healing ministry of Christ to all who came into the hospital.

By way of history, the Sisters were invited in 1921 by the then Bishop of Lismore (John Carroll) to run the hospital. Four pioneering Sisters of Charity were sent from Sydney to run the hospital. The Sisters continued that ministry for the next 60 years.

Today, the hospital ownership remains with the Lismore Catholic Archdiocese.

On the Friday afternoon prior to the gala dinner, Sister Clare, Sister Deidre and myself were invited to tour the hospital.

The CEO, Steve Brierley, the Director of Mission, Joe Pereira, and the Director of Clinical services, Kylie Bennett, spoke with immense pride about the hospital's continuing mission to care with compassion those who are sick.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Sisters of Charity left the hospital in 1980, what forcibly struck me



Deirdre Hickey rsc pictured with Clare Nolan rsc

throughout the tour, the gala dinner and the mass on Saturday morning, was the incredible and lasting legacy the Sisters of Charity had left the hospital and all who work in it.

It reminded me again how we stand on the shoulders of those committed and loving Sisters who have gone before us.

Mr Gary Humphrys  
*Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries*

# ST VINCENT'S PRIVATE HOSPITAL NORTHSIDE CELEBRATES 20 YEARS

On Saturday 30 July 2021 my Trustee colleague Gary Humphrys and I joined Clare Nolan rsc, Bishop Ken Howell, Ms Anne Cross AM (Board Member, St Vincent's Health Australia), Mr Oli Steele (CEO, St Vincent's Private Hospital Northside) at the 20 year anniversary celebrations of St Vincent's Private Hospital Northside, Brisbane.

The mass was held at The Cathedral of St Stephen and commemorated two decades of providing compassionate, high quality health care to the community. In 1998, the Sisters of Charity (now represented by St Vincent's Health Australia under the stewardship of Mary Aikenhead Ministries) and the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters entered an agreement to build our hospital (then known as Holy Spirit Northside Private Hospital). The build heralded a new era in the provision of private health services to Brisbane's northern suburbs. Our first patient was admitted in July 2001. In October 2018, the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters transferred Mission and ownership to St Vincent's Health Australia, bringing to a close a very successful 17-year partnership. Today, St Vincent's Private Hospital Northside continues to bring God's love to those in need through the healing ministry of Jesus, with a commitment to those who are poor or vulnerable.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all our wonderful executives, staff, volunteers, and consultants for your dedicated service for those we care for and treat and also to all who continue the tradition of care by the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters and the Sisters of Charity Australia to the Brisbane community. As Venerable Mary Aikenhead said, "Let what is good, and given to us from the hand of God and His Church, be prized and practised; time will prove its value."

**Prof. Michael Drew**  
Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries



Mr Elwyn Henaway,  
Aboriginal Artist



Ms Lisa Eastment,  
Executive Manager -  
Mission



Dr Bill Donnelly,  
VMO 20 years



Mt St Michael's College Choir

All photos were taken pre-lockdown



Trustees Prof. Michael Drew and Mr Gary Humphrys, Clare Nolan rsc – Sisters of Charity of Australia, Mr Oli Steele – CEO and Dr John Quinn - Director of Medical Services pictured with Bishop Ken Howell and the hospital's 20 year staff and VMO's

# YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

This year, I have had the privilege to represent Mt St Michael's College (MSM) in the Lord Mayor's Youth Advisory Council (LMYAC). This council is composed of Year 10 school representatives who meet once a term with the Brisbane City Council Lord Mayor to discuss key social issues affecting youth. The aim of the council is to develop the members as leaders and allows them the opportunity to participate in decision making at a local and citywide level. Through this, I chose to run a youth homelessness donation drive at MSM.

Youth homelessness is a major concern with 42,400 young people aged 15 to 24 presenting alone to Australian Specialist Homelessness Services in 2019 to 2020. There are an estimated 4,500 youth aged 12 to 15 in Brisbane who do not have access to safe and secure housing (Brisbane Youth Services, 2021). COVID-19 has increased the amount of homelessness on our streets as many families are facing financial strain which has impacted upon the security of accommodation.

Mt St Michael's College promotes the inclusion of faith, integrity and compassion into our learning in accordance with Mary Aikenhead Ministries and the Sisters of Charity mission and values. In term two, I was able to put these values into action by organising the donation drive. I was gladly supported by Mt St Michael's with the staff helping to spread the news about the donation drive. The students generously donated a range of toiletries and sanitary items with three large boxes being delivered to the local Councillor's office.

Implementing the drive to support homeless youth and importantly ensuring its success involved a number of steps. Firstly, I needed to seek permission from our Deputy Principal - Mission, Mr Campion. I was fortunate enough that he agreed this was an important issue which sat within our College values. Next, I needed to raise awareness of the drive throughout the College community. To do this I went to Years 7 and 8 during Homeroom and talked about this opportunity to help someone our age who is going through a tough time. It was so exciting seeing the enthusiasm in the younger grades to help homeless youth. I was also able to speak at the College assembly promoting this donation drive and the importance of it to the whole College community. The three large boxes of donations we were able to deliver to the Councillor was a lot more than I expected.



Mr Steven Toomey - Councillor for The Gap Ward (Brisbane City Council) pictured with Miss Charlotte Bennett, Student, Mt St Michael's College

Many students were very supportive of the drive. A fellow Year 10 student, Sophie Garvey said, 'The Youth Homelessness Donation Drive was an incredible opportunity that Charlotte organised and promoted at MSM. It was amazing to be part of this process as it was so beneficial to give back items to the less fortunate that would generally have been taken for granted.'

This donation drive was an amazing experience that I was very grateful to be a part of. As an MSM student, I utilised my leadership skills, gained confidence and was able to view the support MSM has to offer towards student initiatives. I feel I was given a unique opportunity by LMYAC, supported by MSM to be able to act as a servant leader, living out Christ's mission to help the less fortunate. The response and support from the students in donating items was heart-warming and if a similar scenario was offered again, I would definitely volunteer to be involved.

Ms Charlotte Bennett  
Student, Mt St Michael's College

## References

Brisbane Youth Services. (2021). *Homelessness & Young People - The Facts*. Retrieved from <https://brisyouth.org/daggy-jumper-day/homelessness-young-people-facts/>

# CHAPLAINCY IN AGED CARE

*'Wisdom is with the aged, and understanding in length of days.'*  
**(Job 12:12)**



**ST VINCENT'S  
CARE SERVICES**

## Frs Seamus and Peter

Conversations with Fr Seamus McMahon and Fr Peter Clifford, Chaplains in St Vincent's Care Services, help guide us across Mary Aikenhead Ministries in bringing increased love, justice, hope, and compassion to the elderly.

Fr Seamus continues his priesthood in Brisbane, about Bardon and Mitchelton, having been a Marist for 63 years and a priest for 57 years continuing to build memories of his time in the Highlands of New Guinea (27 years), Fiji (3 years), and Brisbane. Fr Seamus was born in County Sligo, studied for the priesthood in Dublin and has family settled in many countries - indeed, an international man. He still has that broad Irish accent and a sharp wit for humour.

Likewise, Fr Peter has a great sense of quiet, laconic humour. Peter is a Franciscan of 67 years and has been a priest for 60 years in a number of Parishes including Kedron, Paddington, and Waverley. Fr Peter has lived in his current parish of SVCS Bronte since 2016, which he describes as 'a place of great love and charity.'

Seamus and Peter are two priests 'young in heart and mind' who bring love and compassion to all they meet and the keepers of great wisdom and understanding.

## Sacraments, prayers and presence for All

Fr Peter says that, 'those at Bronte appreciate having a Chaplain and Mass being said each day at 9.30am and I appreciate being there for them.' Fr Seamus spoke of the importance of communion in being 'not a reward for being good, but rather food/sustenance for the journey.' Both believe in God's gift of presence for the aged, 'being there for the people' in supporting, anointing, sharing courage, and calmness in the journey ahead.

Seamus talked about the critical need for a Chapel at each site. A place to pray, reflect and to say farewell to others. Each day and especially in November, Mass is offered for those who have passed and their families. Indeed, Seamus and Peter offer Mass for those who have died and feel some of the deaths acutely even though it is a merciful parting. Peter commented that there is 'always a lot of prayer after death as you pray for one another and then to the person who is still with us in the Communion of Saints.'

## 'Being made a fuss of'

'Do not cast me off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength is spent.' Psalm 71:9

Seamus and Peter talked of the importance of family and friends for the aged - those in their immediate family, those friends they know and those whom they now live with and the staff they meet each day. Seamus says to 'recognise what they have given to the world. They are not to be dismissed and hidden away for we are all human and if we last long enough age does not discriminate.'

Fr Peter talked of Friendship being the gift of St Francis in bringing compassion to others, in living the Gospel. 'Friendship is a fountain for solidarity. It blossoms through accompanying and being accompanied. Even those who choose to be alone, or those abandoned, can be helped by being offered friendship.' Peter encourages others to participate, to bring someone along to exercises and the activities. 'It's a way of making links. The importance of Bingo and Happy Hour where you have a friend on either side - a tremendous way to start a journey to God - "Friendship"'. People appreciate 'being made a fuss of.'

## Qualities within

Both agree of the need for aged care staff and Pastoral Carers who can relate to people. Staff who have 'God's people skills, an ability to talk with and get to know people, to be friendly - to raise you up and rev the place up at times.'

Fr Peter is 87 and as he says 'on a par with many of the residents. I know some as past parishioners though I appreciate we are on decline...I find it touching to be part of the journey.' Fr Seamus returned to the attribute of friendliness. He believes 'the fast lane is getting too quick and we need to see the person and don't walk past, to be on the same terms with all, to accept people as they are and help them know they are loved and accepted. You have to contribute to the lives of others, accompany them, talk and chat and share their stories.' Fr Peter commented that, 'it's a great blessing being with the aged. I have learnt so much from wise, elderly people. The growth of 'gentle friendships' and trust through conversations and time shared.' Though with a smile in his words Fr Peter suggests that 'you don't want to be overcome by the wisdom of others.'

Both Seamus and Peter see the aged care locations as little parishes of people from varying backgrounds. Fr Peter suggested 'that in a place like this you are cut down to size in a kind way where no one is better than anyone else.'

On August 14, 2021 Fr Peter was in the COVID-19 Sydney lockdown and due to a contact people were asked to stay in their room for five days. 'We can't do our exercises or Bingo on Saturdays that exercises our minds and where we meet friends. The hairdresser can't come in - the men could do with a shearer. But we are well protected. There's not a cough or sniffle in the place. The staff are real carers, they are so dedicated. A little kindness and someone with whom to chat. The Nepalese staff are so worried about their families in Nepal. They are a noble people.' Seamus was strong in his comment that, 'you cannot over appreciate the staff as they do their work "for the love of the people" . I strongly suggest an Affirmation Day for Staff!'

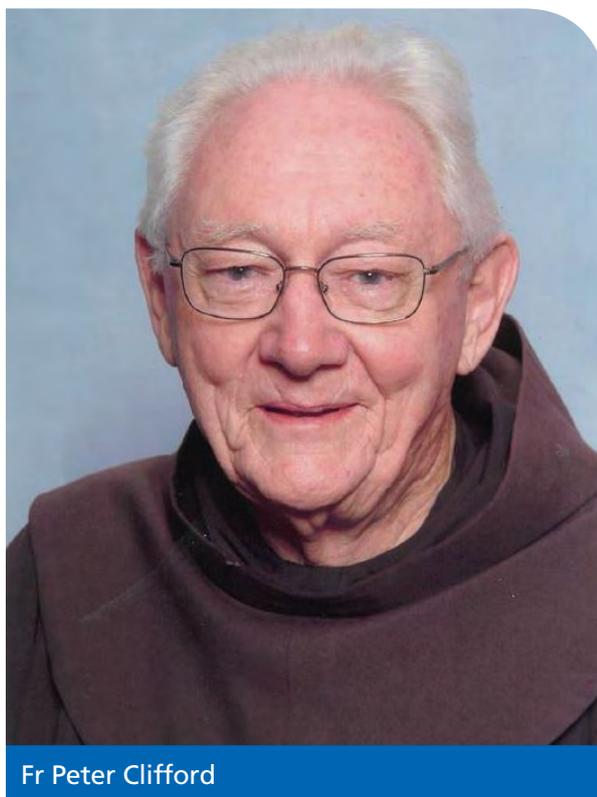
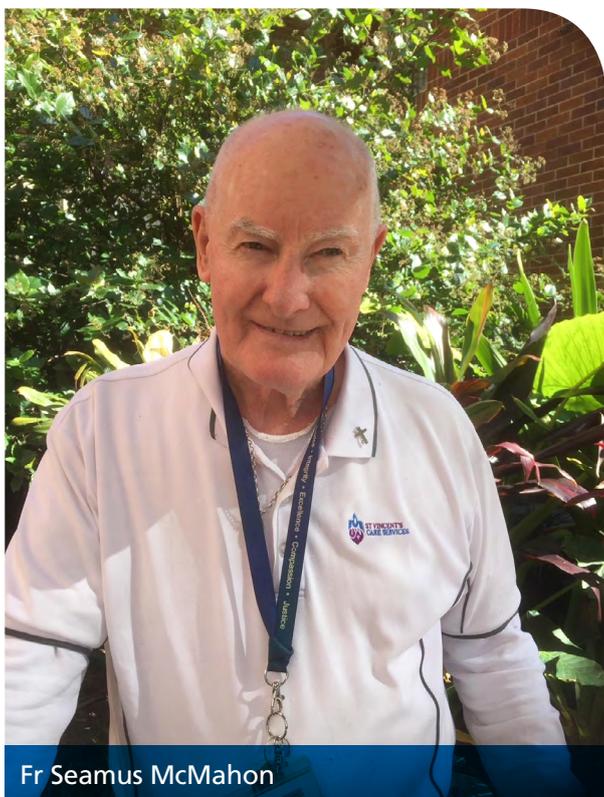
### Their gift of presence

'Grey hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life.' Proverbs 16:31

I spoke with Fr Seamus on August 9, 2021, the Feast Day of St Edith Stein who said, 'God has control over every little thing.' In speaking with Fr Peter he shared the words of St Augustine, 'be sure to pay special regard for those...who are brought into close contact with you.'

Mary Aikenhead Ministries is blessed by the 'grey hair' that comes into close contact with us and particularly through St Vincent's Care Services. Their and their family's faith and trust have given us the gift of their presence and we continue to offer gentle attention and friendship through God's love, hope, justice, and compassion.

Assoc. Prof. Peter Howard  
Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries



# TMAM & SVHA JOINT FORMATION

One of the very special opportunities afforded to staff across the Mary Aikenhead Ministries family is the chance to participate in formation. Formation involves experiences that deepen our understanding of our mission, and inspire us to respond to the invitation of Jesus to serve those in need whole-heartedly. Usually these occasions involve a gathering in person, warm greetings, a fantastic focal point, laughter, and some sort of morning tea..... in person. COVID-19 has of course changed all that!

On Friday 6th August, the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries came together on Microsoft Teams, with the Board of Directors of St Vincent's Health Australia for a time of Reflection, Formation, and Prayer. The topic was, very pertinently, the healing ministry of Jesus. Led by Dr Chris Jacobs-Vandegeer from ACUs Xavier Centre for Theological Formation, and with Ms Bernadette Tobin from the Plunkett Centre for Ethics as a special guest, participants were invited to reflect again on the promise we make to the people we serve and to consider how we fulfil this mission in light of the challenges of the present day. In particular we were mindful that our event was taking place on the Feast

of the Transfiguration of our Lord - so, we listened and shared on what we were seeing and hearing in a new light today.

We took the opportunity while gathered to pray in earnest for all people who are impacted by Mary Aikenhead Ministries, especially our staff in health, aged care and education.

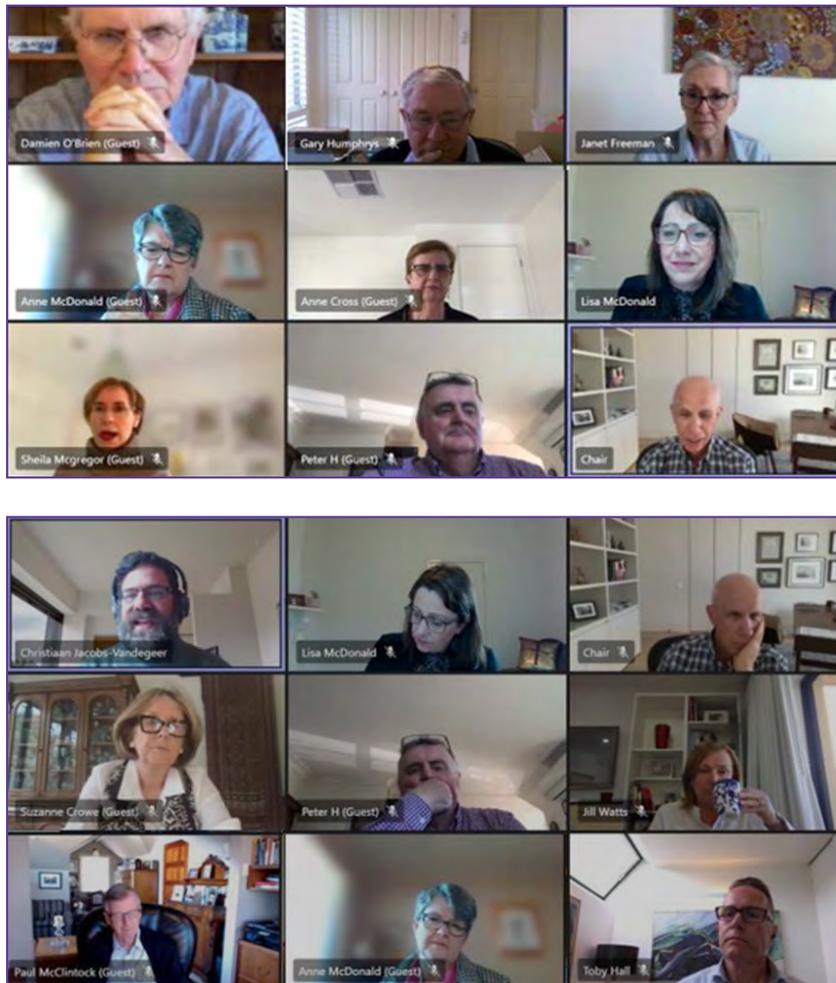
We prayed for our world, struggling under the weight of the pandemic, for wisdom, right action - and to keep those we serve at the heart of all we do.

Mary Aikenhead's own words are a good summation of the spirit of the gathering; "Let us move forward in the spirit of faith which encourages confidence and courage."

All are looking forward to a next gathering, hopefully in person one day soon!

[Dr Lisa McDonald](#)

*Group Mission Leader, St Vincent's Health Australia*



**MARY  
AIKENHEAD  
MINISTRIES**

'JOURNEYS' IS PUBLISHED BY  
MARY AIKENHEAD MINISTRIES

SUITE 201 LEVEL 2/55 GRAFTON STREET  
BONDI JUNCTION NSW 2022

GRAPHIC DESIGN BY  
FINELINE PRINT & COPY NSW

TELEPHONE 02 9291 9400  
WWW.MARYAIKENHEADMINISTRIES.COM.AU

**Privacy Statement** Mary Aikenhead Ministries have a privacy policy statement detailing how personal information is managed, pursuant to the Privacy Act 1988 and the Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000. People receiving this newsletter via email will have their names on our database. This list is not used for any other purpose and will not be given to any other organisation. If you would like your name removed from this list, please contact our office.