



MARY AIKENHEAD MINISTRIES

JOURNEYS

NEWSLETTER

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REJOICING IN ROME

MARY AIKENHEAD MINISTRIES VISITS ROME

The Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries was created as a Public Juridic Person (PJP) of Pontifical Rite with a requirement under its Canonical Statutes to prepare a written annual report to the Holy See. For their inaugural report, the Trustees were asked to make a presentation to the Dicastery in Rome.

On Saturday, 5 March 2011, the Trustees fulfilled their stewardship responsibilities with a formal meeting at the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and for Societies of Apostolic Life ('CICLSAL'). An excellent meeting was held with members of the Roman Dicastery represented by Rev Hank Lemoncelli omi and Sr Mary Wright ibvm.

During the two and a half hour meeting the CICLSAL interviewers were affirming, extremely encouraging but also challenging. The Trustees also met the recently appointed prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life His Excellency Archbishop João Bráz de Aviz of Brazil, who commended the report and the ongoing development of a good relationship with the Dicastery.

The Trustees learnt there are only 17 PJPs of Pontifical Rite in the world, all of which are centred on the health ministry – except for Mary Aikenhead Ministries, which is the first to be established with education, welfare as well as health ministries.

Key topics discussed included the need to focus on charism and Catholic identity such that both will continue in the ministries long after the first Trustees have moved on; the need for the Church to celebrate the rich involvement of the laity despite the decline in numbers of religious, and confirmation of the Trustees' various financial responsibilities. The Trustees were encouraged to liaise with other PJPs and to maintain dialogue with CICLSAL when opportunities arose.

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The interviewers congratulated the Trustees on the comprehensive written report and suggested that while an annual written report is required under the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries Canonical Statutes, it would not be necessary to formally present to Rome in person for another three years.

The Trustees took the opportunity while in Rome to conduct a self guided pilgrimage of Ignatian sacred sites and to attend the General Audience of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI. This all added to the fulfilling and wonderful experience shared by the Trustees.

David Robinson
Trustee – Mary Aikenhead Ministries



The Trustees met with members of the Roman Dicastery including His Excellency Archbishop João Bráz de Aviz of Brazil (centre) and Rev Hank Lemoncelli omi (second from right).

TRAVELLING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF IGNATIUS

Written by Rowena McNally and John Bond*

The first official step in the pilgrimage to Rome was the day of the Papal Audience. With some thousands of other pilgrims, we made our way to an auditorium; the inside venue being selected because of the weather. After the Trustees heard the address from the Holy Father various priests addressed a range of pilgrim groups in their native tongue. As each was announced they would stand and cheer wildly. Some would chant or sing songs. His Holiness acknowledged them and read a message out in their language. It was very moving.



During their visit to the Dicastery the Trustee's met with Sr Mary Wright ibvm.

The Ignatian pilgrimage proper started the following day when all of the Trustees arranged to meet at the Chiesa di Sant'Ignazio di Loyola before moving on to the Chiesa del Gesù where St Ignatius is buried.

After lunch we walked up to Chiesa di Sant'Andrea al Quirinale which is a beautiful small oval church by Bernini which has a particular Ignatian connection. It was given to the Society of Jesus in 1565 and re-built into its present form by Bernini from 1658. It is now the church of the Jesuit novitiate in Rome.



Sr Linda lighting a candle at the grave of St Ignatius.

The Ignatian part of the Rome experience concluded the following day with a long walk with Sr Linda Ferrington rsc to the Piazza del Popolo to see the gate through which St Ignatius walked when he entered Rome, namely the Porta del Popolo. We also visited the Chiesa di Santa Maria del Popolo, just inside the gate as pilgrims throughout the centuries have done.

A day or two later saw us leaving Rome and flying to Barcelona with Sr Linda. A long walk down the Ramblas las Catalunyas led us into the old part of Barcelona. Further wandering through the narrow and picturesque streets eventually took us to the magnificent Santa Maria de Mar, the church where St Ignatius begged for food when he was in Barcelona.



Sr Linda Ferrington at the shrine of the Black Madonna at Montserrat.

* John Bond is the husband of Trustee Rowena McNally



Rowena McNally and John Bond at the shrine in the Holy Cave at Manresa.

After Manresa, we drove across Catalonia to the Basque country. Loiola, the village of St Ignatius' birth, is now subsumed within the small village of Azpeitia in the Basque country in north-west Spain. The Santuario de Loyola is a significant complex which has grown around the old Tower-House in which Iñigo de Loyola's was born in 1491. There the pilgrimage ended where St Ignatius began his life, and also the long journey from being an injured soldier to devoting his life to God. The last act was a mass conducted entirely in Euskara, the ancestral language of the Basque people and the mother tongue of St Ignatius.

Next stops on the pilgrimage wereMontserrat and then Manresa. Montserrat is the Marian Sanctuary and Benedictine Monastery set in the midst of precipitous cliffs near Barcelona, visited by St Ignatius in 1522. It was here that he made his firm commitment to devote his life to God. Later he moved to the nearby village of Manresa where he led a life of penance and prayer, eventually commencing to write the *Spiritual Exercises*. The cave in which he undertook this task has been preserved and a church built around it.

The last act was a mass conducted entirely in Euskara, the ancestral language of the Basque people and the mother tongue of St Ignatius.



A sculpture of the Saint shortly after the war wound which led to his long recuperation and eventual conversion.

FORMATION DAY MARY AIKENHEAD EDUCATION BOARD

On Tuesday, 22 March 2011, the Trustees gathered with the Mary Aikenhead Education (MAE) Board at St Vincent's Clinic. The day began with Richard Harpham welcoming all present, and explaining the context for this day and the essential place of continuing adult formation in the lives of all members of Mary Aikenhead Ministries.

The first session, *Preferential Option for the Poor*, was lead by Julie Morgan who provided a breadth of experience, energy and vision, and ignited a wealth of possibilities for the future.

Fr Paul Slyney celebrated Eucharist during which the Trustees missioned the directors of MAE. This enabled Trustees and directors to affirm their Catholic Identity and proclaim their commitment to the Mission of God.

There was no possibility of drifting away after lunch when Dr Michele Connolly rsj broke open the scriptures around the *Woman at the Well*. The image of 'The Well' becoming a point of discussion for the directors that they may wish to continue to reflect upon.



Christ and the Woman of Samaria, Paolo Veronese c. 1550

SR MARIA CUNNINGHAM HONOURED FOR A LIFETIME OF CONTRIBUTION



Sr Maria Cunningham rsc OAM (centre) celebrates her award with other Sisters of Charity (from left) Sisters Helen Clarke, Leone Wittmack, Linda Ferrington and Elizabeth Costigan.

On 21 April 2011 Sister Maria Cunningham rsc OAM was presented with the inaugural "Catholic Health Australia Sr Maria Cunningham Lifetime Contribution Award".

This new award, created by Catholic Health Australia (CHA), is to recognise those who over the course of their life have given extraordinary service to the Catholic Church's health and aged care ministry.

Sr Maria was instrumental in establishing CHA and keenly supported "Integration 2000" which encouraged Catholic hospitals and aged care services to form new partnerships. She was also a teacher and mentor to many young doctors and nurses who worked in Catholic hospitals.

Additionally in January 2011, Sr Maria received an OAM for her service to health and social welfare organisations, including the Blake Cottage Prison Ministry Project in Castlemaine. She is a founding member of the project, which provides the wives and children of prisoners with accommodation, allowing them to visit loved ones in Loddon and Tarrengower prisons.

Sr Maria now lives in well-earned retirement in Melbourne but as CHA CEO Martin Laverty pointed out:

"We wanted to ensure she and others knew that the contribution she has made during her working life in Catholic Health had not been forgotten."



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'THE HEART OF OUR MISSION' MARY AIKENHEAD MINISTRIES CONFERENCE 2011

At the heart of the Trustees' mission lies their commitment to ensuring appropriate formation of those involved within Mary Aikenhead Ministries.

The Trustees envisage their annual Conference as a significant opportunity to engage in formation with leaders from across the ministries. The 2011 Conference entitled "Heart of our Mission" is to be held in Melbourne in July and is intended to assist our leaders to:

- i) access the riches of the Catholic tradition, especially as it pertains to leadership;
- ii) bring alive the person of Mary Aikenhead as a leader and model, and
- iii) be encouraged, inspired and affirmed as they seek to integrate the professional skills they bring to their role as leaders with their passion and commitment for ministry.

In February we introduced Ms Juliette Marsh Williams who will travel from the USA to share her experience as a lay woman leader within the Catholic Church. Juliette will be ably supported by Fr Brendan Byrne sj who will introduce the Trustees' foundational Gospel story.

We look forward to sharing highlights of the Conference with you in the next edition of *Journeys* and on our website.