



JOURNEYS

NEWSLETTER

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JUSTICE

What is justice?

How do we live out this value across and throughout our ministries?

These are questions that should exercise each one of us daily.

The prophet Micah gives us guidance.

And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:8)

However, it is not difficult to see the injustice that pervades our society, both historically and in the present day.

For example:

-The terrible injustice that was (and is) inflicted on our first nations peoples.

-The terrible injustice over our treatment and detention of refugees and asylum seekers.

-The terrible injustice that occurred in our own church regarding the historical abuse of innocent children.

I could go on...

Examples can also be readily found on the world stage:

-The conflict and suffering that occurs in many countries such as Ukraine.

-The growing income/wealth inequality around the world, particularly in developed countries.

Pope Francis in audience with children of the Peace Factory (May 12, 2015) said:-

"Where there is no justice, there is no peace. We are all equal – all of us- but this truth is not recognised and for this reason some people are, we can say, happier than others."

But this is not right!

We all have the same rights. When we do not see this, society is unjust and where there is no justice, there is no peace!

I would like to repeat this with you - "where there is no justice, there is no peace".

Pope Francis has been both emphatic and prolific in his teachings about justice.

"A way has to be found to enable everyone to benefit from the fruits of the earth, and not simply to close the gap between the affluent and those who must be satisfied with the crumbs falling from the table, but above all to satisfy the demands of justice, fairness and respect for every human being." - Pope Francis

JUSTICE

Another quote - "A way has to be found to enable everyone to benefit from the fruits of the earth, and not simply to close the gap between the affluent and those who must be satisfied with the crumbs falling from the table, but above all to satisfy the demands of justice, fairness, and respect for every human being."

Venerable Mary Aikenhead was inspired by the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, to live her life dedicated to serving the poor, the vulnerable and marginalised and the Sisters of Charity have over the centuries continued in this endeavour right to the present day.

Mary Aikenhead Ministries declares that justice is born of love. Justice seeks to ensure that all people are treated in accordance with their unique dignity.

Inspired by Jesus Christ, our ministries seek to challenge oppression and injustice, always giving due priority to those who are poor, we advocate particularly for those who are vulnerable, marginalised and rendered voiceless, even if it puts us at odds with more powerful voices.

Much of this suffering has (and is) a result of the injustice present in society.

As an example, Australia is a signatory to the UN Charter of Declaration of Human Rights which says it is not illegal to seek asylum in any country when you are fleeing persecution and harm.

These refugees have been separated from their families who they left behind when they came seeking refuge for their families nearly 10 years ago and the government have said there is no way this group of people can be reunited with their families or stay in this country. This is unacceptable and we and the Sisters' fight for justice for them. But their (and our) voices are not heard.

Our inclusive health initiatives undertaken by our health ministries and our social justice programs within the colleges are just some of the tangible examples of how we strive to live out our value of justice. I thank God for all that is done every day in our ministries. But we cannot rest on what has been achieved. There is so much more to do.

I began this reflection by asking "what is justice?"

Many of us throughout our ministries confront and respond to this question every day.

May God continue to give us the strength and the wisdom to respond to the needs of those suffering injustice.

Mr Gary Humphrys
Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries

HOBART PILGRIMAGE

On 3 and 4 November, Mary Aikenhead Ministries held a Pilgrimage in Hobart, Tasmania, visiting sacred sites of significance to the Sisters of Charity. As educators at Catholic Ladies' College (CLC), Eltham, myself and my colleague Liana Colaluca, were privileged to be chosen as pilgrims on the Hobart pilgrimage for 2022.

After arriving in Hobart, we came together in prayer to warmly introduce ourselves to our fellow pilgrims and leader, Sr Maria Wheeler. With warmth, Sr Maria shared with us her beautiful stories, a smile and always a joke throughout our pilgrimage. Through prayer and reflection, we learnt about each other's personal stories and shared what we wanted to learn from this special trip.

The pilgrimage began at Constitution Dock on the Franklin Wharf, which was the disembarking point in the early 1800s for the female convicts. It was here we reflected on and had gratitude for the Sisters of Charity who supported these convicts in the early days of the Tasmanian Catholic Church.

We continued with an evening mass at St Joseph's Church, a site most sacred to the early work and care of the Sisters through education. We both



had the privilege of reading at mass, which was a special experience. The next day we departed the Movenpick Hotel early to visit St Aloysius Catholic College at Kingston Beach and Mount Carmel College. As teachers ourselves, it was insightful to see how different schools represented the Sisters of Charity story through artistic paintings, words, and sculptures around their school communities. At all the schools we visited, the warmth and kindness of a humble servant shone through in all the teachers and staff we met.

HOBART PILGRIMAGE

A very moving experience was visiting the Cascades Female Factory, in South Hobart. As pilgrims, we journeyed through the prison that intended to remove women convicts from the negative influences of Hobart; however, we learnt through a beautiful one-woman performance that told the story of the lives led by convict women and the resilience and determination they held. We then finished our Pilgrimage with a special reflection at the Graves of the Early Sisters. At the cemetery, we shared in prayer and reflection on the legacy of the founding Sisters as well as the spiritual insights we had all experienced over the last two days. It was a humbling moment to share in each other's journey, helping us feel connected to each other as well as grateful we had spent these last two days in reflective practice together.

The experiences we shared were so special and I felt very privileged to learn so much more about the Sisters of Charity and the amazing work they dedicated their lives to. It was so humbling to share stories with Sr Maria, Sr Libbey and Sr Margaret, as well as Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries, Margaret McKenna and Professor Michael Drew; all further connecting us as teachers to the CLC story and inspiring my work as a new educator.

We felt very inspired about the stories of these women and their ability to "step into the unknown" and embody the values we are aiming to implement and encourage in our students at CLC. All of these stories from Sr Maria and the Pilgrimage feel very moving and I am so appreciative that I was afforded this opportunity as a young educator.

Ms Liana Gangi
*Teaching Staff/Student Leadership Co-ordinator
Catholic Ladies' College*

Ms Liana Colaluca
*Year 11 Team Leader
Catholic Ladies' College*



Pilgrims gather around the Footsteps to Freedom statues



Pilgrims' dinner



Happy Birthday Sr Maria!



Pilgrims at St Aloysius Catholic College (the old convent)



L to R: Ms Margaret McKenna (Trustee), Libbey Byrne RSC, Maria Wheeler RSC and Professor Michael Drew (Trustee) pictured with Ms Pauline Marriott (centre) - Director of Mission



Pilgrims at Mount Carmel College



Pilgrims listening to the story of "The Proud & The Punished" at the Cascade Female Factory

ST VINCENT'S COLLEGE STEWARDSHIP VISIT

Mrs Anne Fry, Principal welcomed Trustee Chair, Mr Richard Haddock AO, and Trustees, Ms Janet Freeman, Associate Professor Peter Howard and Ms Margaret McKenna to the St Vincent's College Stewardship visit in November this year.

It was a delight to meet the newly appointed 2023 College Captains and Mission Leaders and hear of their passion and vision for the year ahead. In particular, these young women spoke eloquently about respect and inclusion of all and their determination to seek authentic ways of contributing to the lives of people beyond the college; their commitment to giving voice and agency to every student was at the heart of this vision. Symbol and story enabled Anne and her team to share their 2022 experiences; at the centre of this conversation was the MAM value of hope together and the college mission. Anne also shared the College's Master Plan; it affirming to learn how the Master Plan consultations remained true to the St Vincent's College Mission, their Sisters of Charity heritage, whilst ensuring a contemporary and future focused learning context for current and future students.

[Ms Margaret McKenna](#)

Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries



L to R: Mrs Anne Fry (Principal), Ms Jo Kenderes (Director of Faith & Mission), Ms Sheenagh Doran (Dean of Early Secondary), Mr Mitchell Grace (Pastoral Dean of Students), Ms Maryanne O'Donoghue (Dean of Boarding), Ms Elizabeth Brook (Deputy Principal).

ST VINCENT'S PRIVATE HOSPITAL TOOWOOMBA CENTENARY MASS

Trustees Mr Richard Haddock AO, Mr Gary Humphrys, Ms Janet Freeman, and Prof. Michael Drew joined the Sisters of Charity of Australia in Toowoomba to celebrate the Centenary Mass for St Vincent's Private Hospital Toowoomba. Led by CEO, Ms Kathryn McKeefry, the hospital continues this great tradition of service to the people of the Darling Downs.



Back Row L to R: Christine Henry RSC, Leone Wittmack RSC, Margaret Fitzgerald RSC, and Anthea Groves RSC
Front Row L to R: Cate O'Brien RSC, Maureen Parker RSC, Dorothy Bayliss RSC, Deirdre Hickey RSC, Jeannie Johnson RSC and Clare Nolan RSC.

PARRAMATTA PILGRIMAGE

In our last Journeys newsletter, I wrote about the Hobart Pilgrimage and the story of the Sisters of Charity in Tasmania. That pilgrimage was open to all our ministries.

Our recent Parramatta Pilgrimage was a reflection and formation day for Trustees. The Parramatta pilgrimage is offered several times a year by St Vincent's Health Australia (SVHA) and offered as needed by individual Colleges. Despite this several Trustees, including me, had not taken part.

Our formation day pilgrimage was beautifully and energetically led by Fr Darryl Mackie from St Vincent's Private Hospital Sydney, Sr Margaret Fitzgerald, Sr Genny Walsh and historian Mrs Judith Dunn. The Trustees were joined by our newly appointed Mission Leader Mrs Louwana Saba and our Spiritual Director, Brother Ian Cribb sj.

I grew up around Parramatta at Rydalmere. My father's family home was in Westmead opposite Parramatta Park and we frequently played there as children, watching the horses agisted there, listening to the stories of the Park and of the psychiatric hospital next door, especially of their magnificent gardens. Mum grew up in Harris Park and attended Our Lady of Mercy College (OLMC) Parramatta. So I think of myself as a Parramatta person. I have lost count of the number of convicts in my family tree, some of whom I am sure were incarcerated at Parramatta!

So for me in many ways this Pilgrimage was especially poignant. I vaguely knew of the monastery at Subiaco and of the Female Factory and associated buildings as it was still operational as a girls' industrial home when I was young. But the stories of the early Sisters and the amazing work they accomplished first in the Female Factory and then in education and establishing the first St Joseph's Hospital on the site at what is now OLMC were a different story and allowed me to see our history in a new way. By our history I mean Australia as much as I do the Sisters of Charity and Mary Aikenhead Ministries.

The Sisters in Hobart and Parramatta were brave: courage I can only have a small idea about really.

Yet we see and hear of similar courage on a daily basis today from our health, aged care, social outreach and schools: the poor and vulnerable are still with us in a myriad of ways. Our staff respond to the challenges with faith and courage. This is being particularly challenged with the introduction of euthanasia legalisation in all the States where we have facilities.

As Trustees, we thank you for your courage and commitment to our values and assure you of our prayers and support. In many ways you are imitating the works and love which these early Sisters exhibited at Parramatta. Pilgrimages have many forms and yours is another in our rich story.

[Ms Janet Freeman](#)

Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries



JOINT FORMATION SESSION

On Monday 28 November 2022, the St Vincent's Health Australia (SVHA) board gathered together with the Trustees for a joint-formation day at the Sisters of Charity Heritage Centre, Potts Point.

We commenced the day together with a Commissioning Ceremony for Professor Vlado Perkovic (Board Director), and Mr Chris Blake (Group CEO). The ceremony took place at the St Vincent's College Chapel. It was a significant occasion, one that we consider to be a formal welcome into the Mary Aikenhead Ministries family. This ritual is a common practice for us as a faith-based organisation. It is an opportunity to gather in prayer as a group, bless and welcome the leaders into their role, and then send them forth to continue to bring the mission to life in the work that they do.

We wish both Vlado and Chris continued joy and hope in the work they do; and we thank them for their commitment to ministerial leadership.



SVHA Board & Trustees



Missioning ceremony – Mr Richard Haddock AO (MAM Chair) pictured with Mr Chris Blake (SVHA Group CEO) and Prof. Vlado Perkovic (SVHA Board Director)

WELCOME LOUWANA SABA

The Trustees and staff of Mary Aikenhead Ministries are delighted to announce the recent appointment of Louwana Saba to the role of Mission and Formation Director. Louwana previously held the position of Mission Leader at the Mater Hospital in Sydney. In addition to the wonderful personal qualities, skills and experience Louwana brings to this newly created role, Louwana's familiarity and strong relationships across the health ministry has enabled Louwana to "hit the ground running". Louwana will be working with the Trustees to ensure Mary Aikenhead Ministries fulfils its strategic mission and formation initiatives and canonical responsibilities. These responsibilities include ongoing faithful articulation, comprehension, communication and integration of the Catholic ethos, mission, values, and culture across the health, aged care, social services, and education ministries. I am sure that for those who will be working with Louwana from across our ministry network will welcome Louwana in her new role.



CHRISTMAS - A TIME OF HOPE, PEACE, JOY, AND LOVE

Christmas is full of traditions. All the little and big things that we do each year at this time. Some are religious. Some are cultural. Some are familial. Some are new, and some are old.

I remember when I was little, our Christmas tree was snow-white and decorated with beautiful red glass baubles in the shape of apples. We weren't allowed to touch the Christmas tree but I so enjoyed sitting and looking at it. At the base of the tree, there was our nativity – my mum set it within a cave-type structure. There were all the characters to make it real including additional farm animals. This was a job I was allowed to be involved in. I would set up the many cows, horses, sheep, and chickens that gathered around the nativity scene. From memory, we didn't put gifts under the tree. Under the tree was saved for the scene of the birth of Christ, the gathering of the shepherds, and the visit of the Magi.

Nowadays, whilst I would like to have special baubles, I find it too hard to manage to keep an eye on them. And so I have made new traditions with my family. The kids decorate and dress the tree. We listen to Christmas carols while we do so. And we sing, and we dance. I couldn't decide on one nativity set for my home, so I have three. One near the tree, one on the coffee table, and one downstairs. We have an advent candle wreath that we light each week to acknowledge the symbols of this time of preparation in our Christian calendar, symbols of hope, peace, joy, and love. And each year during Advent, my children and I pack hampers and gifts to give to those who are less fortunate than us or those who won't be able to celebrate Christmas as we might. Last year, we took gifts to the Children's ward of our local hospital. This year, we made some hampers for adults connected to our local St Vincent de Paul group.

I wonder what your Christmas traditions are? I wonder if they are inherited or new? Religious or social? Or all of the above.

In the busyness of this time of year, it is necessary to pause and allow moments of prayer, of togetherness, of acknowledgment. From old traditions to new traditions, ones we cherish, to ones we do on autopilot – what is our focus? What is the point of all this? What are our traditions directing us to?

I believe it is to the hope and joy that comes with the birth of the Christ child.



I would like my children to know that Christmas is not about us, but about our connectedness to all humans. It is about the complete hope and pure joy that the birth of Jesus brings to share with all humanity.

Christmas is about seeing the face of Christ in all we encounter. And what does that mean? Well, that means when we see others, we see love. When we interact with others, we do so with love. When we care or respond to the needs of others, it is from love.

Because after-all we are made from God's love to be love in the world.

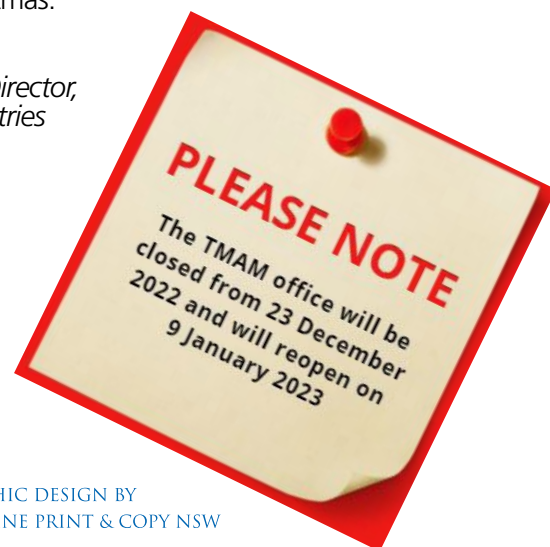
And the birth of Christ [God made flesh to be among us] is the most apt reminder of this.

So may your traditions be fun, and may they be meaningful. I hope they are a mix of old and new. I hope they give you a space to be creative, but also a space to honour and reflect on this time and what it means to us as a faith community.

And I hope in our response to this time of Christmas, we feel called to go and be love in the world.

May the joy of Christ born be with you and yours; and may the hope of the Christ child be with all humanity. Merry Christmas.

Mrs Louwana Saba
Mission & Formation Director,
Mary Aikenhead Ministries



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TELEPHONE 02 9291 9400
WWW.MARYAIKENHEADMINISTRIES.COM.AU

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