



JOURNEYS

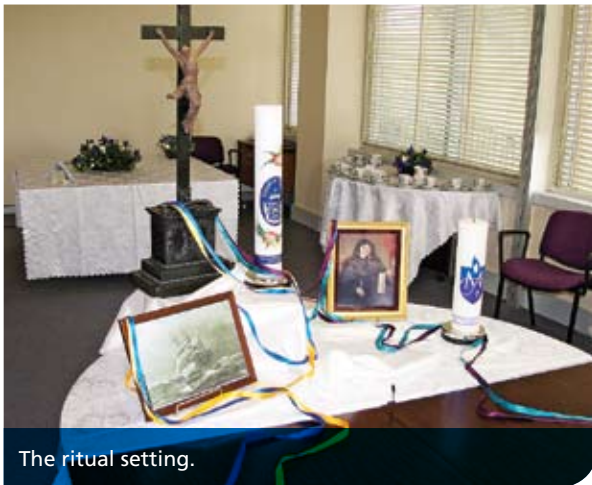
NEWSLETTER

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HISTORY IN THE MAKING

JULY 1, 2009 MAY HAVE BEEN AN UNEVENTFUL DAY FOR SOME, BUT FOR THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF AUSTRALIA, IT WAS ONE OF IMMENSE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE.

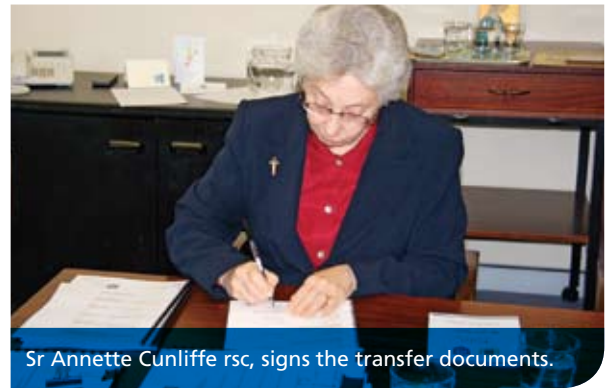
On this day Mary Aikenhead Ministries was established as the new Public Juridic Person, responsible for most incorporated ministries previously under the Trusteeship of the Congregation. A model of lay ecclesial leadership had been brought to birth. The civil transfer took place in the board room of the Congregational Offices. This occurred in the context of prayer.



The ritual setting.

The Black Crucifix, sent to Australia by Mary Aikenhead with the first sisters, was the centre of the ritual setting. It was flanked by two large candles – one inscribed with the crest and colours of the Congregation, the other with the crest and colours of Mary Aikenhead Ministries. To one side was an image of the 'Francis Spaight' and to another a portrait of Mary Aikenhead. As the Congregational candle was lit, a new 'sea crossing' began, and all present were invited to 'put out into the deep'.

After the ritual and the prayer, which was being prayed by all communities in union with this moment, the lawyers for the Congregation handed multiple transfer documents to the Congregational Leader, Sr Annette Cunliffe, who commenced signing



Sr Annette Cunliffe rsc, signs the transfer documents.

along with her Councillors and then passed the documents to the new Trustees.

Mary Aikenhead Ministries was established.

This was the fulfilment of a vision specifically articulated in April, 2005 and carried forward through the Petition and Implementation Stages. The vision was now a reality.

The courage and spirit of solidarity of the whole Congregation was powerfully evident.

Sister Elizabeth Dodds rsc
Trustee, Mary Aikenhead Ministries



Trustees of Sisters of Charity of Australia (left) and Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries (right), together with legal counsel, prepare for the civil transfer.

FOCUS: THE JOURNEY BEGINS –

THREE COMMISSIONING CEREMONIES CELEBRATE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MARY AIKENHEAD MINISTRIES.



Richard Harpham and Sr Annette Cunliffe rsc.



Richard Harpham



"I found the ritual immensely moving – most particularly the moment of the laying on of hands and the anointing. I hope that you experienced tangibly, the power of the Holy Spirit, at that time and throughout the Ceremony."

BARBARA BROWN-GRAHAM, PROVINCIAL, FAITHFUL COMPANIONS OF JESUS



Sr Libbey Byrne rsc, anoints Trustee, Rowena McNally.

"You must have been delighted and moved at the Blessing Ritual at St Columba's for the passing of the baton. It was an historic occasion and the fulfillment of years of hard work by yourself and others. Congratulations."

JULIE CHAMBERLIN,
CHAIRPERSON, ST COLUMBA'S
COLLEGE, ESSENDON

"As chairperson of the Trustees of this new entity, I want to reassure all those who have respected, admired and, in many cases, dedicated themselves to the works of the Sisters' ministries, that we will operate them in the tradition that the Sisters have built over the many years of their leadership."

RICHARD HARPHAM, CHAIRPERSON,
TRUSTEES OF MARY AIKENHEAD MINISTRIES



Brisbane Ceremony, hosted by Mt St Michael's College, Ashgrove.



Sr Laureen Dixon rsc

"We believe that now, while the ministries are so strong, is the time to ensure their future, by placing them in the committed hands of these five Trustees and those who will follow them."

SISTER ANNETTE CUNLIFFE RSC, CONGREGATIONAL LEADER



Melbourne Ceremony, hosted by St Columba's College, Essendon.

PLAIN SPEAKING

THE JOURNEY OF FORMATION FOR THE TRUSTEES OF MARY AIKENHEAD MINISTRIES.

BROTHER JOSEPH SMITH OH

SPIRITUAL COMPANION TO THE TRUSTEES
OF MARY AIKENHEAD MINISTRIES



"Special regard has been given to the life and inspiration of Mary Aikenhead and her gift of Ignatian Spirituality to the Congregation, and in turn to us."

What is formation? Formation is the process of engaging deeply and fully in one's life-story, remembering, noticing, attending and making connections with one's present experiences, recognizing the Divine in the ordinary and the extraordinary. It is the journey of embracing the life of God in our innermost being, through our thoughts, feelings and particularly relationships with others and creation.

Essential to this formation process has been time spent reflecting, sharing and praying with the core scriptural passages from the documents presented in Rome for the approval

of our new PJP. We have also taken time to consider deeply our character, as Mary Aikenhead Ministries, rooted firmly in Christ through the life of the Church down the centuries, and in particular through the rich tradition of the Sisters of Charity. Special regard has been given to the life and inspiration of Mary Aikenhead and her gift of Ignatian Spirituality to the Congregation, and in turn to us. As part of their initial formation the Trustees have met with me for a full day a month for the six months following their appointment and preceding their formal commissioning.

To assist in this important phase of formation, the Trustees and I were ably led by Sister Margaret Dwyer rsc. Sister Margaret spent several sessions with us introducing and enriching our knowledge of Mary Aikenhead. This period of formation was marked by a comprehensive visit to the Congregational Archives. Margaret led us with particular skill in the area of Ignatian discernment from a personal perspective, and most importantly, from the perspective of group discernment.

These elements of discernment, personal and group, are vital components of the life of the Trustees and formed the framework for a Trustee retreat held at the Sisters' house at Shellharbour. Sister Margaret and myself led this time of retreat for the Trustees. The retreat was timed for around the eve of the commissioning

of our new Trustees and marked the end of their initial stage of formation. After these days of prayer and reflection we were joined for Eucharist and a community meal by the spouse of each of the married Trustees and Sister Annette Cunliffe, Congregational Leader. This provided a wonderful opportunity to connect the everyday life of the Trustees to this new expression of their faith, as they were about to take up their role of leadership.

I continue to meet each month with the Trustees, as formation is an ongoing process. Faith sharing is the centerpiece of our time together, at each meeting we break open both our lives and the scriptures together, becoming ever more aware of God's loving presence. This hopefully assists the Trustees to serve Mary Aikenhead Ministries with real wisdom, integrity and vision.



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