

# Te Kete Atawhai

## MERCY BASKET



‘Hurra for foundations, makes the old young and the young merry’

CATHERINE MCAULEY



### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- ♦ Mercy colleges link up on walking the talk – page 5
- ♦ Social networks ‘create cowards’, says Mercy principal – page 8
- ♦ HEART- stopping family violence before it starts – page 11





## Valentine's Day blooms aplenty at Assisi celebration

Valentine's Day was a special occasion last month at Atawhai Mercy Assisi, the hospital-rest home in Hamilton, thanks to the combined efforts of the facility's diversional therapists and food service department.

Two married couples currently live as residents at the facility, and 11 others have spouses living in the local community.

A special couples-only celebration on February 14 was enjoyed by all but one of the 13 couples; residents were able to pick a single rose for their spouse from a basket prepared by diversional therapist Annette Whittle.

"The vibes in the room were incredible," says CEO Judy Hindrup. "It was so lovely, with lots of positive comments and lots of photos taken! Real Mercy in action, I thought, where we care for families, too."

Situated in three acres of park-like grounds with over 500 rose bushes, the 86-bed facility was commended by external surveyors in the most recent accreditation and certification process held at Assisi this month. The diversional therapists and food service department were among services singled out for praise.



*WATCHED by husband John, Joan Myles chooses her rose for Valentine's Day from a basket held by Justine Litherland, a diversional therapist at Atawhai Mercy Assisi in Hamilton. 'Real Mercy in action,' says CEO Judy Hindrup, 'caring for families, too.'*



**GIVING LIGHT:** This Easter candle has been produced by Christchurch Sister of Mercy Anna Nicholls and two colleagues, as part of a fund-raising project to support the Congregation's education ventures in Samoa and Tonga. Under the slogan 'Giving Light', reflecting Catherine McAuley's insistence that we be as 'shining lamps, giving light to all around us,' the 150mm-high candles come in two designs, for the seasons of Lent and Easter. The Lenten version bears the call from the prophet Joel, inviting people to return to God with full hearts; the Easter candle announces with alleluias that Christ is risen. The candles are available for \$20 each, plus \$4 postage, from Giving Light, 1/672 Ferry Road, Woolston, Christchurch 8023; or by email from orders@givinglight.co.nz.

## Old stamps help to pay Samoan school fees

Over the years, Sr Muriel Shallue, of St Mary's Convent in Ponsonby, has raised hundreds of dollars by saving stamps for Mercy outreach projects. These days, she enlists the help of residents at St Catherine's Rest Home nearby, to trim the stamps and prepare them for sale to a dealer in Whangarei.

Among the outreach projects sponsored by St Catherine's are two pupils at Paul VI College in Samoa; each year, the rest home pays for their school fees and stationery, around \$750 for the pair.

The girls who receive the financial support write each year to the rest home, expressing their thanks and reporting on their academic progress. "On behalf of my family and myself, I would like to say thank you very much for your support this whole year," wrote one last November. "I came second in my class last year, and I am sure I will get a good place again."

In fact, reports school principal Sr Fatima, she topped her class in 2011 and is currently in Year 11. The scholarship is greatly appreciated by parents, especially when they have several children at school. "It's a huge help to have at least one of their children assisted with fees and stationery," says Sr Fatima.

Other fund-raising plans by the mission team at St Catherine's this year include raffles and the occasional sausage sizzle, popular at lunchtime with students from St Mary's College next door.

*STAMPS: Sr Louis Smith (left), a resident of St Catherine's Rest Home, helps Sr Muriel Shallue prepare used stamps for sale. The proceeds go to outreach projects supported by the rest home, including the payment of school fees and stationery for two pupils at Paul VI College in Samoa.*



*COVER IMAGE: Founders: Sisters of Mercy Edwina Ulberg, Judith Leydon and Nora O'Neill, three of the first four Sisters of Mercy in Samoa, cut the cake at the 40th jubilee celebrations in Leulumoega on January 24.*

## Jubilee sounds at Mercy's school in Samoa

By FAUMUNINA FELOLINI TAFUNA'I reporting from Samoa

Forty years ago, Sisters of Mercy from New Zealand brought Catholic education to rural Samoa with the opening of Paul VI College. To honour that continuing mission, voices joined in jubilant song on January 24 in the village of Leulumoega, Samoa.



*ABOVE LEFT: Floral lei wait to be given to special guests.*

*LEFT: Wearing traditional headdress, a student in the role of taupou leads a procession at the Jubilee Mass.*

*ABOVE: Senior students at Paul VI College ... 'who will launch out into the deep and heed the call?' asked Sr Judith Leydon.*

Current and former students and staff of Paul VI College, some of whom had travelled great distances to be there, filled the Basilica Minor of Sancta Ana for the occasion.

Also attending the celebration was Samoa's Head of State, His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese and Masi'ofa Filifilia Tamasese.

A recurring theme was how God had supported Paul VI College and the Sisters of Mercy in Samoa over the past four decades, and how there was a need for a new generation to come forward to take up the challenge for the next 40 years.

Founding principal Sr Judith Leydon, who had travelled from Auckland, spoke at the Mass. "In the next 40 years, who will serve God's mission?" she asked the students, quoting their school's motto. "Who will launch into the deep and heed God's call, so there will always be a Paul VI?"

Sisters of Mercy opened the college on January 21, 1972 – at the request of Samoa's Bishop Pio Taofinu'u and two years after Pope Paul VI had visited the country. On his visit, the pope had said Mass at Leulumoega at the Church of St Ana as it then was.

"Paul VI College was opened with only two

classes," said Sr Judith. "There was not a blade of grass, only a big sea of mud."

In 1976, the college buildings were completed, and were blessed by Apostolic Delegate Archbishop Acerbi.

"God has been in this all the way through," said Sr Judith, who reflected that were now Sisters of Mercy teaching in three schools in Samoa, including St Theresa's Primary School in Fusi (on the island of Savai'i) and St Joan of Arc Primary School in Leulumoega. The sisters had also founded in that district a health clinic which closed at the end of 1997.

For the jubilee celebration, Sr Judith was joined by fellow Paul VI founders Sr Nora O'Neill, who travelled from Ireland, and Sr Edwina Ulberg, also from Auckland. The fourth founder, Sr Claver Schollum, died in 2003.

During the Mass, there were messages from several former Paul VI students who have since become Sisters. At the end of the Mass, Sr Judith presented a mission candle to the six Sisters of Mercy currently responsible for the three schools in Samoa.

One Paul VI graduate who contributes to daily life at the school is the current principal, Sr Fatima Lemisio. She says the school this



*Sr Fatima Lemisio, principal of Paul VI College... 'still much potential to be achieved'*

year has a roll of 145 students – boys as well as girls.

From Leulumoega, Sr Fatima graduated from Paul VI in the early 1980s, when it was a girls-only school. She is currently waiting to confirm her next placement, which may include a sabbatical in the USA for more study.

She says the current lack of interest in religious life is a concern for her, as is the growing number of non-Catholic students who attend the college. But she believes there is still great potential among the staff and students at Paul VI, waiting to be revealed.



## Keeping hope alive in Tonga

Sr Senolita Vakata is one of a community of four Sisters of Mercy who live at Lapaha, 30 minutes drive from her office in Tonga's capital, Nuku'alofa, where since 2003 she has been the national director of Caritas Tonga.

As justice and development coordinator for the Diocese of Tonga and Niue, she has responsibility for training Catholic adults in the church's social justice teaching and applying it to local issues, working to change attitudes that lead to injustice.

As Tonga is frequently struck by cyclones, she has a vital role in coordinating relief and rehabilitation projects, such as the construction of hurricane-proofed housing for vulnerable families. In 2009, the tsunami that devastated Samoa also hit the island of Niua Toputapu in Tonga, and Sr Senolita coordinated a trauma counselling team to respond quickly to victims. She has overseen tsunami housing reconstruction for 20 families in Niua Toputapu who wanted to remain on their own land.

"I have found this work very important and rewarding," says Sr Senolita. "It always reminds me of one of Catherine McAuley's sayings, that Sisters of Mercy 'should be the kindest people on earth.'

"Each day I keep in touch with mothers, fathers and their children, old and young. Through my ministry I help to keep hope alive for vulnerable people; I provide a voice for the voiceless. Being with people in their own places and maintaining dialogue among them helps people to feel valued. My deep commitment to discipleship keeps hope alive for the people among whom I work."

High on the list of goals for Caritas Tonga over the next four years are global warming and climate change, and humanitarian emergencies. Sr Senolita has visited New Zealand as a guest of Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand, thanking people in this country for their ongoing support for integral human development. Caritas provides work and projects for some of Tonga's most needy families, ensuring income so they can send their children to school, as well as providing water tanks and a healthy environment.

"Climate change is one of the biggest



Sr Senolita (right) with Congregation Leader Anne Campbell outside Caritas Tonga office. Sr Senolita had visited families in Niua Toputapu following a tsunami which claimed several lives and severely damaged homes and properties.

issues faced by Pacific nations," says Sr Senolita. "Caritas Tonga is organizing evacuation drill at the village of Nukuleka in September this year. My hope is that Caritas Aotearoa NZ will continue to share their resources with the needy people in Tonga. Caritas Tonga values the great partnership with Caritas Aotearoa."

## A home of their own

Sr Senolita says there are many moving stories she can share about the help that comes through the Lenten Appeal run by Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand which changes the lives of vulnerable families in her land.

One such story is of a young mother from the island of Niua Toputapu, who migrated four years ago to settle in Tongatapu on land owned by her brother-in-law. She came with her father and her seven children, ranging from 14 years to a baby of six months. Since her husband left her for another woman, she now lives with her seven children and her aged father in this very small single-storey house, with corrugated-iron walls.

Built from Lenten funds, the house sheltered the family during recent flooding; the children are now attending school, says Sr Senolita, and above all their dignity is upheld. The photo shows the new home, with one of the children outside.



## On front line of global warming

The island nation of Tonga, with its population of 100,000 people, is at the top of a UN list of countries most vulnerable to natural disasters in the Pacific. Small island states like Tonga are on the front-line of global warming. As temperatures and sea levels rise, they spoil fresh-water reservoirs and threaten to inundate land.

The impact of climate change and sea-level rise on Tonga has been studied for more than 20 years, but there has been little action in the developed world to reduce emissions to mitigate the problem, despite the growing scientific evidence and treaties like the Kyoto Protocol.

Tonga can expect to get hotter, but with little change in rainfall. Over the next century, surface air temperatures and sea levels are predicted to rise. There are also signs that some land areas are sinking.

Tonga already experiences extensive coastal erosion and sea-water infiltration which are expected to worsen as sea levels rise. Reef degradation will affect the productivity of coastal fisheries.

Rising temperatures will add to the risk of more frequent epidemics of dengue fever and food-borne diseases. A World Health Organisation profile has assessed that "Tonga has been generally slow to recognise and respond to climate change and human health risks."

## Youth workshop helps turn Mercy into action

Principals of Mercy Colleges have long talked of a gathering for student leaders from their schools. This year, the talk turned into action for a group of 50 senior students from three New Zealand secondary schools with strong links to Mercy.

MARY LYNCH, PRINCIPAL OF VILLA Maria College in Christchurch, knew that some of the girls from her school who last year participated in a session at Mercy International in Dublin before attending World Youth Day in Madrid were keen to share their experience with others.

She invited Sister of Mercy Anna Nicholls, director of Religious Studies at Marian College in Christchurch to facilitate a programme in the summer holidays. With support from the Congregation's Leadership Team, Anna led a two-day workshop on Transformative Leadership at Villa Maria, attended by 50 students from Villa and Marian Colleges in Christchurch and Carmel College in Milford, Auckland.

After a welcome and prayer, the workshop began with a two-hour session led by scripture scholar, Sr Kathleen Rushton, reflecting on the story of the Good Samaritan, highlighting the cultural aspects of the parable and the insights into mercy which it offers. After lunch, students spent time on the life of Catherine McAuley and the way she used her gifts and skills to bring mercy to her world.

Students were invited to reflect on their own experience and gifts, and on how they could use these to become good leaders. "For Christchurch students, the experience of the earthquakes was certainly a factor," said Anna Nicholls. "It has helped them to become stronger young people, who value life and have a deeper appreciation of what is really important to them."

The second day brought a chance to put theory into practice. Students reflected on the qualities of Mercy leadership, shared examples of how this is shown in each of their schools, and developed action plans for the coming year.

A 'solidarity lunch' highlighted the uneven distribution of food in the world, as a small group received several pizzas to eat while the rest shared small bowls of rice. The afternoon ended with a Eucharist and prayers for the year ahead.

"The gathering was a great success," said Anna Nicholls. "It gave students a chance to build links as a wider Mercy community, and to reflect on the importance of being Mercy leaders, enabling all students at their schools to be channels of mercy in our troubled world."

Year 13 students from Villa Maria, Jessica Smith and Emma Barbafiera liked the time spent on the Good Samaritan story. "It showed how we have to be leaders towards the people who need us. We simply can't just walk past them."

The pair had also attended the Mercy International gathering in Dublin last year, as part of a 24-member group from their school which went on a WYD pilgrimage. "We learnt there the need for Mercy in today's society." Jessica, who is Service Captain at Villa this year, would really like to do some mission work. "If I hadn't been to Dublin," she added, "my awareness of Mercy organizations would not have been so well developed."

The World Youth Day experience in Madrid gave the girls a deep sense of community. "It was a chance to see how widespread our Catholic community is," said Emma. "It cemented the faith for me."

Another Villa student, Virginia McCabe, appreciated reflecting on the life of Catherine McAuley. "She saw a need in her own time and place, and did something about it. She acted on the need." But for the Dublin gathering and the two-day workshop in Christchurch, said Virginia, "I would not have been as inspired to volunteer with an organisation such as 'Mercy Beyond Borders'."

Kate Oorschott, another Year 13 student from Villa, said the workshop was great for learning leadership skills, "but the challenge now is to put these into action, to walk the walk and talk the talk. Through our actions, we can inspire others and people can see the difference Mercy makes. We can incorporate Mercy into the whole of our lives."



ABOVE: Students from three schools with Mercy links gather in the auditorium of Villa Maria College during the Mercy Leadership workshop held there in January. The quote displayed behind them is from Catherine McAuley: 'May God look on us with love; then we shall be able to do anything God wishes us to do, no matter how difficult to accomplish.'



ABOVE LEFT: Surrounded by pupils from Marian College is Villa Maria student Jessie Smith (centre back) who is Service Captain at Villa this year. The girls are holding canvas designs they have made, expressing their own gifts of Mercy. 'If it hadn't been for my visit to Dublin last year,' says Jessie, 'my awareness of Mercy would not have developed so well.'

ABOVE RIGHT: Workshop facilitator, Sister of Mercy Anna Nicholls, who spent a year teaching at Paul VI College in Samoa before returning to Christchurch, to serve as director of Religious Education at Marian College, shortly before last year's earthquake severely damaged the school. 'The experience has given me greater empathy for others in difficult situations.' She describes the workshop she led as 'a privilege', and hopes that students have left with a greater understanding of their potential to make 'a lasting difference in their schools and in their world.'





LEFT: Samoan Sisters entertain with a traditional Samoan dance, the Siva, after the jubilee lunch.  
BELOW: Wearing traditional puletasi made for the occasion, Samoan Sisters of Mercy line up at their 40th jubilee celebration in Auckland on January 21. From left, Salome Ioane, Priscilla Kohlhase, Paula Anamani, Marieta Ifopo, Tulili Ah Ping, Akenese Nun Toon, Malia Fetuli, Edwina Ulberg and Fatima Lemisio.



# Samoan 40-year Mission celebrated

PHOTOS BY PATRICIA ROWE RSM

When the Sisters of Mercy arrived in Samoa in 1972, Cardinal Tom Williams was a young New Zealand priest, working as a missionary in the village of Leulumoega where the Sisters were to begin their mission.

To provide them with a home while their convent was being built, he vacated his presbytery and lived for five months in the sacristy of the church. "We could never have achieved without him what we did in those first years," Sister Judith Leydon, the first principal of Paul VI College, later recalled.

"Fr Tom Williams was our guide, mentor and friend, and equally involved in the pastoral care of so many people. When the story of the college is told, his name must not be forgotten."

So when sisters and their colleagues gathered in Auckland on January 21 to celebrate 40 years since their Samoan mission began, who better to lead the concelebrated Mass but Cardinal Williams, now retired and living in Wellington?

He was joined at the altar by three bishops - Robin Leamy (assistant Bishop of Auckland), Stuart O'Connell (former Bishop of Rarotonga) and Denis Browne (Bishop of Hamilton), and five priests who have all been involved in Samoa in some way.

The bishops and clergy were welcomed by Sr Priscilla Kohlhase, who also greeted the three surviving founders of the Samoan mission who taught at Paul VI College (Auckland Sisters Judith Leydon and Edwina Ulberg and Sr Nora O'Neill, who has since returned to live in Ireland). The fourth member of the founding

group, Sr Claver Schollum, who ran a health clinic in Leulumoega for three years, died in 2003.

Included in the formal welcome were members of the Congregation's Leadership Team (with apologies from Leader Anne Campbell, prevented by illness from attending), prominent Samoan couple George and Rosita Fepuleai, and several former students from Paul VI College among the choir that led the singing for the anniversary Mass.

Among the capacity crowd which filled the chapel of St Mary's Convent were nine Samoan Sisters of Mercy, as well as many of the sisters who have worked in Samoa and lay colleagues who shared their ministry of teaching and caring for the sick.

"We thank each one of you who have contributed to the ministry in Samoa," said Sr Mary Catherwood, on behalf of the Leadership Team. "This is a time to renew our commitment to be centred in God, impelled by mercy, working to keep hope alive in our world today."

### Remarkable response to an 'extraordinary' call

The Sisters of Mercy who travelled from Auckland to establish a mission in Samoa were responding to "an extraordinary suggestion" from Pope Paul VI, said Cardinal Williams at the Mass marking 40 years since that mission began.

On the first-ever visit by a pope to Samoa in 1970, Paul VI had issued an historic letter to the whole church, Cardinal Williams recalled.

RIGHT: Ifoga ritual – Cardinal Williams prays the absolution at the beginning of Mass. The Samoan fine mat is lifted from the person beneath it after the prayer, as a sign that forgiveness has been granted and received.  
BELOW: Dressed in traditional Samoan costume, a young Samoan woman leads the procession of gifts at the Jubilee Mass.



As Mass concludes, Sr Judith Leydon entrusts the Mercy Mission Candle to Sr Tulili Ah Ping, the youngest member of the Congregation now working in Samoa. "Launch out into the deep," was her charge.

Cardinal Tom Williams after the anniversary Mass, with Sisters of Mercy who founded the Samoan mission in 1972 (from left) Sr Nora O'Neill, Sr Edwina Ulberg and Sr Judith Leydon. A fourth Sister, Claver Schollum, has died.

"It was remarkable, in that it was sent not from Rome, but from the South Pacific. And it was not signed by the pope alone, but co-signed by the local bishop and representatives of the people, their catechists and priests."

The core of the letter was the single sentence. "We repeat the call which, from distant times, God has addressed to generous hearts: 'leave your country, your family and your father's house, for the land I will show you'."

The response of the Sisters of Mercy was "a remarkably ready one", said Cardinal Williams. "The charism of Catherine's Congregation converged with the plea from the Pacific, and came to fruition in the form of college, clinic and convent."

When they gave their 'yes' to that call, "there was nothing but a wilderness of waving palms and head-high weeds" on the proposed site at Leulumoega, said Cardinal Williams. "No electricity, no phone, no water supply, the incursion of pigs, a liturgical language that was alien, pupils with limited knowledge of English and, as they were to

experience later, the havoc of hurricanes.

"But their faith and trust prevailed over all else." Their 'yes' to founding Paul VI College was resolutely repeated when later asked to take responsibility for Leulumoega's primary school, later still a primary school at Fusi on Savai'i, and then to open enrolment of boys at Paul VI College.

The Sisters of Mercy had been "incredibly generous" in providing personnel for Samoa, said Cardinal Williams. "The sisters and their lay volunteers rank among New Zealand's premier exports.

"I'm completely confident that I speak for the archdiocese of Samoa-Apia and for the present and past pupils of your three Samoan schools when I express heartfelt gratitude for your commitment and dedication.

"We can do little more now than to give thanks in this Eucharist, asking God to bless and reward you, and to guide you as you move on from this Ruby Jubilee to the golden years ahead."



## Mercy: excellence achieved when all are winners

After nine years as principal of St Catherine's College, Kilbirnie (roll 280) – which she describes as 'the biggest little school in Wellington', Jane Holloway moved with her family to Auckland in October to become the principal of St Mary's College in Ponsonby (roll 826). In this interview, she talks about the reasons for the change, and about her passion for Mercy education.

JANE HOLLOWAY ADMITS TO BEING passionate about Mercy education. "I think Catherine McAuley was a remarkable woman. I tell her story often, and I want our families to know her story as well, and to understand why we operate in the way we do."

In October last year, she resigned from the much smaller school in Wellington where she had been principal for nine years, to move with her husband and two children to Auckland, filling the gap left at St Mary's College when Sandy Pasley was appointed principal of Baradene College.

It was a conscious decision, but a hard one, Jane admits. "It meant uprooting the entire family, moving to a city where we knew nobody, where none of our friends or family lives. And we were moving from a wonderful Mercy school."

At the heart of her decision is her passion for mercy, and her strong belief that what Catherine McAuley did was right. "Catherine was a woman ahead of her time. She saw a need, and she addressed it. I would love our girls to have that same strong sense of belief in themselves, a sense of acting for justice."

Mercy empowers young women, she says. "And in empowering them, mercy creates confident and capable women who still have sensitivity for social justice issues – looking beyond themselves to a wider scope, looking to see how they can make a difference, to see what they can do differently."

Social trends and peer pressure are strong today, "but we want to see young women who are prepared to stand firm in their beliefs, yet who do so in a compassionate and merciful way. It's a matter of helping them to work through social and peer pressure, to see how they can be independent yet still support their friends, without necessarily agreeing on everything with them."

How does a school like St Mary's help students to address the challenges of internet and cyber technology? It's an ongoing struggle, admits Jane Holloway, "and we haven't got the solution, other than to talk with students about the consequences."

Social networking creates cowards, she says. "People say things when they're hiding behind a screen that they would never say face to face. The kind of hurt that creates can be very painful, and it takes an effort to repair the damage it causes."

Text bullying and hurtful comments on Facebook invite the question, "Is this the Mercy way to act? Is this what we stand for? The technology is in the hands of young people as never before, and the horse has bolted," Jane Holloway says. "So what we're having to provide is almost a retrospective education, going back to our Mercy values and asking students about how they should respond. But it's a massive challenge."

"The whole problem with digital communication is that you may not have meant to offend, but because there's no intonation or body language, the words on the screen can be misinterpreted. We want girls to remember the importance of building relationships, in the face-to-face context."



ST MARY'S principal, Jane Holloway...  
Mercy empowering young women to make a difference.

Some of the issues come, not from the now technology, but from what Jane calls 'the teenage' problem. Teens can be very self-absorbed, she says. "It's all about them. I think Mercy helps them to look beyond themselves, to see that there are others in worse-off situations. And hopefully this enables them to step out of themselves, to help others."

Like many other Mercy schools, St Mary's has chosen a Mercy value for its special focus this year. "For 2012, our value is excellence, in all its forms. This includes being committed, sticking to whatever we sign up to. We have social justice groups within the school, and we're very strong on mission. Every class has its own mission focus, raising funds for charities or causes they identify and work to support."

"What I like about St Mary's is that we achieve success, but success doesn't come at a cost to others. We've got this incredible atmosphere of people wanting to succeed, through the Mercy value of excellence, yet it's pursued in a very friendly, supportive, cooperative environment. And I think that's a perfect balance."

"In order to succeed, we don't have to walk over others, or chop down anyone in front of us. It's about achieving excellence not only for oneself, but looking to see how we can support those around us, too."

Jane Holloway is currently president of the Australasian Mercy Secondary Education Association; her colleague, Kath Deady (principal of Carmel College) is also on the executive. New Zealand schools gain a lot from being part of the network, says Jane. "Australia has a lot of very good Mercy networks that are well used by schools there."

An example is the Mercy Justice Tree, which brings together students from all over Australia, working in terms of leadership on social justice issues, providing outreach and linking their local community as part of the group.

"We would love to have more networking and interaction between Mercy schools in New Zealand. It is something we are working towards," she says.

In some ways, New Zealand is further ahead than its Trans-Tasman partner. Sisters of Mercy in Australia are only now going through the process of joining communities, which the New Zealand Congregation did some years ago. "We're already a long way down that track, in terms of working through the difficulties and problems that can cause."

"I think it's important for the Australians not to forget that we also are part of Mercy. They seem so big and self-sustaining, that it's important for a partnership to emerge which goes both ways."

Mercy is all about relationships, Jane Holloway concludes. "It's about how you deal with people – that's what makes us merciful, ensuring that people different from us are valued. Mercy is about working together to see that we mend relationships, build a bridge and move on in a really positive way helping each other and building community."

"Mercy helps that, because it's about empathy, compassion, understanding. It's that whole thing about trying to get a win-win solution which everyone can share."

## Mercy Hospital and Salvation Army partners in care

A new Charitable Outreach venture, launched by Mercy Hospital in Dunedin earlier this year, is enabling a partnership with the Salvation Army to improve drug and alcohol rehabilitation in the city.

DETAILS OF THE THREE-YEAR, \$300,000 programme which began in January were shared with Te Kete Atawhai by Dr Janice McDrury, mission coordinator at Mercy Hospital. She describes the partnership with the Salvation Army as "a really good fit" with the ethos of the Sisters of Mercy.

"Drug and alcohol issues have a significant impact on individuals and families. The Sisters of Mercy, who founded Mercy Hospital, have been keen to see this partnership established, because it is such an effective way of responding to human needs."

One specific aspect of the partnership is Pathways for Women, offering drug and alcohol treatment for women who have complex needs, which often include a background of trauma and abuse. The programme, which offers a chance for real change, has seen the number of women involved double in the past three years. Begun with the District Health Board, the initial programme is being expanded to accommodate the increased numbers of women who wish to participate.

A second specific focus is on Relapse Prevention. Funded by the Salvation Army, this initiative currently offers a weekly group meeting, providing continuing care and individual follow-up to support clients in their progress. Numbers in this group have trebled in three years, and the partnership with Mercy Hospital will enable the service to expand.

The third specific focus is on a Reintegration Facility, providing housing options under the supervision of the Salvation Army. A three-month period of consolidation, with appropriate support, enables individual clients to learn skills necessary for living independently in the community. The support



PARTNERS: (From left), Salvation Army Bridge Programme manager Glen McLennan, Mercy Hospital chief executive Richard Whitney, Salvation Army national addiction services manager Gerry Walker, and Mercy Hospital mission coordinator Janice McDrury at the launch of the new drug and alcohol treatment partnership between the Salvation Army and Mercy Hospital Dunedin. (Photo: Bruce Munro, The Star).

from Mercy Hospital will ensure appropriate staffing levels for clients.

The partnership has been welcomed by Salvation Army Bridge Programme manager Glen McLennan, who says the funding from Mercy Hospital will provide support that "otherwise would not have been possible."

Salvation Army staff currently work with more than 75 clients, across six drug and alcohol addiction treatment and after-care programmes. Staff resources are often stretched, and the new funding will ensure better outcomes, says Mr McLennan.

The contribution from Mercy Hospital's Charitable Outreach will be \$100,000 a year for the next three years, after which the partnership will be fully reviewed. The hospital's chief executive, Richard Whitney, notes that Mercy Hospital is a not-for-profit organisation which returns its earnings to

the community through a range of outreach programmes.

Mercy Hospital currently funds the University of Otago's McAuley Chair in International Health, subsidized surgical services for people in need, and a variety of other charities in Dunedin. "We are constantly reviewing how our funds are used," Mr Whitney says. "This new partnership is clearly aligned with our values."

At a ceremony to launch the partnership last month, Salvation Army national addiction services manager, Captain Gerry Walker said it would be integral to achieving sustainable change in people's lives.

"The people we care for will be better served because of this," said Captain Walker. "I'm looking forward to a long and prosperous relationship between our two organizations."

## Mercy badge with a local flavour

A new badge, featuring a New Zealand version of the Mercy cross, has been developed to honour staff with long-service records in Mercy facilities.

PROFESSIONALLY MANUFACTURED IN AUCKLAND, THE BADGE CARRIES THE OUTLINE of the *Heart of Mercy* bronze, created by sculptor Gael O'Leary in 2003 for the entrance to St Mary's Convent, Ponsonby. The sculpture depicts the internationally known Mercy cross above a pair of koru, the tips of the New Zealand fern.

The badge also bears the word 'Mercy' in Maori and English, and identifies in five-year increments the number of years served continuously in organizations including Mercy Hospice Auckland and the Congregation's aged care facilities.

The badges for five to 20 years have a silver background; those for 25 years and above are gold. The new badges, presented for the first time at long service awards ceremonies last year, replace an earlier version that featured the traditional Mercy cross and shield.





At the end of each year, Villa Maria College in Christchurch holds a special graduation ceremony for its senior students. They prepare for it during the year by reflecting on a set of Mercy goals. Towards the end of the year, each of them writes to the Principal of the college, outlining how well they have progressed on the journey of living for others. Last year's Graduation ceremony took place in the college auditorium on December 9. Here, the Director of Religious Studies at Villa Maria, Ronel Moore, gives her impressions of the ceremony.

## Mercy's call - keeping hope alive in our world today

The uninformed observer might struggle to make sense of the scene. On stage are 100 or more young women dressed in all their finery – feminine, refined, dignified, imbued with an air of anticipation.

The occasion is the Graduation Liturgy of Villa Maria College. This is not an academic graduation; it's a declaration by each of these students that they are ready and willing to embark on life, striving to live by the principles of Mercy. It's a declaration that they will strive to prize what is of value, to do ordinary things extraordinarily well, to value lifelong education, service and community, and to walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

Villa Maria is a Catholic school for girls in the Mercy tradition. As such, the values taught here are in keeping with the Gospel, and more than excellence in the academic, cultural and sporting fields is sought.

Catherine McAuley, foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, was courted as a wealthy heiress and one of the most promising women in the Ireland of her day. Instead, she chose to give her life for the uplifting of people burdened by the yoke of poverty. In this tradition, students at Villa Maria who have completed their academic school life are invited to go through a process of prayerful reflection, to judge for themselves whether they can be called Mercy women, ready to serve wherever they see the need.

This reflection process focuses on whether they have done their best, in the particular circumstances of their lives and according to their specific gifts and talents, to develop spiritually. They have also to



ABOVE: Villa Maria students chat before they go on stage for the Graduation Liturgy on December 9. Earthquake damage to other venues in the city meant that the ceremony was held in the school auditorium last year. RIGHT: Villa Maria students (from left) Darlene Adrian, Carmela Pangan and Georgia Bellet. "The graduation process allows us all to reflect on how to live the ideal of being a Mercy woman," said Georgia, "it's great to be in it together."



reflect on whether they have acted to alleviate the needs of their fellow humans. For that's what Mercy education strives to develop – people who are aware of the obstacles that prevent some from living with dignity, people who will take action to make a difference where they can.

After the liturgy, the Villa Maria

graduates leave the stage to continue the celebration with parents, care-givers, friends and teachers. They have now been commissioned and sent out to commence their lives as Mercy women. The sight of them – their beauty and their youth, their poise and the promise they hold – is impressive. Herein lies hope for our world.



VALUES: These colourful banners, each displaying one of the seven core values of St Anne's School in Manurewa, were carried in procession and blessed last month at a Mass to mark the school's 60th jubilee. Opened by the Sisters of Mercy in 1952, the school is unique throughout New Zealand in having had a Sister of Mercy on its teaching staff since it was founded.

## HEART – stopping family violence before it starts

With support from Te Waipuna Puawai, a Mercy community development centre that has worked in Glen Innes for over 21 years, a new venture aimed at preventing family violence before it starts has been launched.

Known as the HEART Movement (standing for Healthy Relationships in Tamaki), the initiative is backed by a network of 26 community and government agencies, and aims to promote healthy relationships and prevent family violence in the Auckland suburbs of Glen Innes and Pt England.

Welcoming guests at the formal launch of HEART in the Glen Innes Library on February 14 was Kathryn Scott, chairperson of Te Waipuna Puawai which is one of the key network members of the venture.

"HEART is more a movement than a programme," she said. "It signals a break from the past, indicating that family violence is no longer acceptable."

Kathryn Scott acknowledged support from several major funders, including the Department of Internal Affairs which is paying the salary of HEART coordinator, Cristy Trewartha. Formerly project manager for four years of the nationwide 'It's Not OK' campaign, Cristy's Master's dissertation was entitled "Effective community mobilization to prevent family violence."

The big difference between HEART and earlier programmes is that it is research-based, Cristy said. "Our community readiness model tells us where we are at, what resources are already in place and how well they are known."

"The catalyst is to stop family violence; but our long-term goal is communities that actively grow loving, safe and supportive relationships.

"HEART is here for the long haul; our planning tool is designed for 20 years. And we will test our strategies to measure their effectiveness within the next 12 to 18 months."

Cristy was introduced by Puamiria Maaka, manukura of Te Waipuna Puawai whose Ellerslie-based centre provides the HEART coordinator with an office base.

There is genuine interest in the community about ending family violence, said Puamiria Maaka. "Family violence affects many families and impacts on the whole community. HEART is a whole-community approach. It gets community members on board, involving them in making changes."

There is widespread concern in the community about family violence, Puamiria Maaka said, and everyone has a part to play in its prevention. "A series of street-level launches are planned for Neighbours



TOP: Heart launch participants gathered in the Glen Innes Library include a broad range of local leaders, including Sisters of Mercy who have lived and worked in the community for over 20 years.

ABOVE LEFT: A Heart poster, featuring local leaders in Glen Innes, including Puamiria Maaka (rear, second from left). 'Change takes time – we're here for the long haul' is the message.

ABOVE RIGHT: Heart coordinator Cristy Trewartha... this programme is research-based.

Day, over the weekend of March 24-25, when we will hold local events to further engage with community members."

The meeting was attended by local councillor Richard Northey, who brought apologies and a message from Auckland City Mayor Len Brown. "This is a grass-roots initiative which aims to be proactive, addressing the causes of violence before it occurs. HEART is based on local research; it draws on international experience but is tailored to local needs. The council is delighted to see this movement launched today."

### NATIONAL STATS TO PONDER

- Half of all violent crime in New Zealand is family violence.
- Police recorded 101,041 family violence incidents in 2009-10.
- Police estimate that only 18% of family violence events are reported.
- At least 74,000 children and young people aged under 17 were present at family violence situations attended by Police.
- In 2009, nearly 75% of the 29 female murder victims in New Zealand were killed by offenders identified as a family member or partner.
- One in three New Zealand women will experience physical, sexual or psychological violence at the hands of an intimate partner in their lifetime.
- The estimated economic cost in New Zealand of family violence in today's figures is \$8 billion a year.

### LOCAL STATS

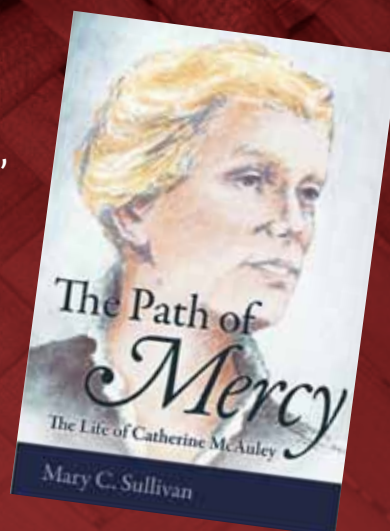
- Police in Glen Innes last year attended 647 family violence incidents – an average of 54 a month.
- Among the victims last year, 3% were Asian, 9% European, 48% Maori, 38% Pacific Island and 2% other or unknown.
- Of the 647 incidents last year, 558 victims were female, 88 were male. Among the offenders, 538 were male, 103 were female.



## Moved to get up again:

“An intelligent, courageous, humorous woman, she was, even when exhausted by the rigours of her travel and ministries, always moved to ‘get up again’, as she said, for the sake of those in need...”

From the dust jacket of ‘The Path of Mercy: The Life of Catherine McAuley, by Mary C Sullivan rsm, 2012, The Catholic University of America Press



**Te Kete Atawhai is a newsletter produced three times a year by the mission staff of Tiaki Manatu Mercy Ministries Trust, for Nga Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa Sisters of Mercy New Zealand.**

Editor is **Dennis Horton**, who can be contacted at:

DHorton@somauck.org.nz

Ph (09) 360 7874

PO Box 6015, Wellesley Street, Auckland 1141.

Te Kete Atawhai is designed by La Fabrica Design Studio in Christchurch – [www.lafabrica.co.nz](http://www.lafabrica.co.nz) – and is printed in Christchurch by Verve Digital using sustainable practice print methods.

