



Karanga Atawhai

A newsletter for Sisters of Mercy and partners in mission

No 4. September 2019

Mercy's korowai mirrors Catherine's mana

By DENNIS HORTON

Progress on the path towards creating a ministerial Public Juridic Person was noted at a meeting in Wellington on July 31 between the Sponsorship Committee which oversees the process and the three working parties which are helping to achieve this goal.

In her mihi to welcome participants, Congregation Leader Katrina Fabish rsm acknowledged the importance of Whānau Mercy as a key phrase in talking about the journey towards a ministerial PJP. 'We seem more like a family now, a family in action. We are in a new time, with a real convergence as groups of sisters and partners come together.'

The primary focus is on relationships, not ownership, Katrina noted. 'Whānau is the model that describes Mercy in Aotearoa. This is who we are, this is how we want to look.'

The theme of Whānau was taken up by Richard Kerr-Bell, Kaihautū Wairua Mission Administrator of Tiaki Manatū and member of the Sponsorship Committee. He likened Catherine McAuley's shawl, a symbol of her care of the sick and dying, to a Māori korowai or ceremonial cloak. Created through a sacred and skilled craft, the korowai takes a long time to make, involving practice, patience and gentle learning. The korowai reflects Catherine's mana or spiritual power which is derived from her faith in God and in Jesus, the Word

made flesh; it brings a sense of shelter and is passed from one generation to another.

Richard ended his comments with three images of whānau mercy, each with a whakataukī or proverb to explain its meaning. Te Kete Whānau is the basket containing the many gifts that will be shared between the Congregation and the new PJP. 'With your contribution and mine, the people will be well cared for.'

The second image, of a waka or canoe, represents Hui Whānau, the annual gathering of the Mercy family including sisters and partners, a time to share stories and strengthen relationships. 'He waka eke noā' - we are all in the waka together, with no one left out. The third image is of whānaunga Mercy, the extended Mercy family, including everyone important to the whānau who may not be in the Congregation or the PJP: 'Mine is not the strength of one, but the strength of many.'

GRAPHIC: CHARMAINE LOVE
© TIAKI MANATU



*Whānaunga Mercy:
'E hara tāku toa i te toa taki tahi,
he toa taki tini kē.'
Mine is not the strength of one,
it is the strength of many.*

Clarifying mission a task for working group

In the absence of the Mission Working party chairperson Lorraine McArthur, participating in a Mercy ethos programme at Mercy International, Dublin, the report from this group was presented by Patricia Rowe rsm, Kathleen Rushton rsm and Peter Buckland. Their report included an update on steps to clarify the PJP's mission and core values, a summary of a core curriculum for those appointed to the PJP, and some questions relating to mission for the Legal Working Party to consider.

Kathleen Rushton noted that the core curriculum highlighted an 'engaged spirituality', suggesting that God's presence is best discerned when real-life issues are tackled. A major challenge for the Legal Working Party will be to ensure that people highly qualified in governance are also attuned and linked to mission.

'What does mission-based decision-making look like?' was a question for the Legal Working Party to consider.

Peter Buckland spoke of the need for a mission stocktake, aimed at alerting PJP members to resources already in existence which may provide a benchmark for the future. 'We need a format for assessing mission, which will equip PJP members for making a self-review of their performance. If what sets us apart is mission, we may require direction from the Sponsorship Committee on setting out clear expectations of mission for CEOs and board chairs.'

Sponsorship Committee member Astrid Lambert noted that the PJP would have its own charter - the go-to resource of every Mercy board - that will highlight mission expectations for CEOs and chairpersons.

Complex issues for Legal Working Party

Chaired by Denise Fox rsm, the Legal Working Party is making progress in developing for our Ministerial Public Juridic Person a board structure which will have legal identity under both canon (church) law and civil law.

The model currently favoured proposes that trustees approved by the Congregation will appoint directors to a board which may function as a holding company to oversee ministries which will have their own civil legal identity.

The Legal Working Party has completed a second draft of canonical statutes, clarifying the duties and powers of sponsors and trustees, as well as the relationship which the PJP will have with the Holy See. Working

Party member Margaret Martin rsm noted that the canonical statutes contain elements that are permanent in nature and not likely to change often. 'This will be an enduring document, with legal requirements for both church and civil authorities.'

Among issues still to be clarified are how the charitable status of Mercy's current ministries might be affected by the new arrangements, and the question of remuneration for holding company directors. The holding company will be responsible for implementing and managing a Formation for Mission programme. A subcommittee of the board will manage the Formation for Mission team, enabled by resources from this board.

WORKING PARTY SNAPSHOT



PHOTO CREDIT: TAIKI MANATU

Chair of the Finance Working Group, Doc Godfrey is General Manager of McAuley Trust, the Congregation's central administration and asset-owning entity.

A chartered accountant with an MBA from the University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business, he was commissioned as a director of the Tiaki Manatū Board in 2016.

POSTSCRIPT: At a session at the Chapter held by Sisters of Mercy in Auckland during the last week of August, Doc Godfrey was joined by the other two chairpersons of the PJP working parties for a presentation to sisters attending the Chapter. This was an opportunity for members of the Congregation to review at first-hand progress towards the PJP. The five-yearly Chapter also voted a new Leadership Team which will take office on December 12. Current Congregation Leader Katrina Fabish did not seek re-election. Sue France was elected Congregation Leader. Also elected to the team were Raylene Dwyer, Judith Moroney, Tina Vaeatangitau and Mary Wood.

Mission vital if ministries are to remain sustainable

A raft of complex practical issues was presented by the Finance Working Party, led by its chair Doc Godfrey. Among them was the question of how Mercy's current ministries are sustained by the Congregation, and how sustainable they would be if this support was not continued.

That support at present comprises monetary grants or donations from the McAuley Trust, personal involvement by individual sisters, and provision by the Congregation of land and buildings. The Finance Working Party is seeking at present to clarify these three different levels of support, in an attempt to determine the sustainability of existing ministries,

Beyond this, the working party will need to recommend to the Congregation what it may need to invest in the proposed PJP to ensure the future of existing incorporated ministries.

Finance Working Party member Luke Ryan noted that sustainability implies interdependence; ministries rely on other people and entities to stay alive. He noted that mission is an essential asset for Mercy's ministries and that liabilities are anything that erode its vision and values.

The Finance Working Party noted that ministries will need to develop plans that pursue short-term financial goals while maintaining long-term mission goals. 'Ministries need to build plans for alternative financial resources that will allow them to meet their mission, should the financial assistance of the sisters no longer be available,' the report suggested.

Sisters Rosemary Revell and Sheryl James reported that non-incorporated ministries funded by the Sisters of Mercy will remain with the Congregation. Should they develop into financially sustainable ministries, they may negotiate to transfer to the PJP at some stage.