



He atawhai...  
tā mātou kaupapa matua.

Mercy...  
the business of our lives.  
Catherine McAuley

## Whānau Mercy, Tikanga Mercy

E hara taku toa i te toa taki tahi, he toa taki tini ke.  
Mine is not the strength of one, it is the strength of many. Whakatauki

### Whānau Mercy

#### Atawhai mai Atawhai atu - Mercy received, Mercy shared.

This principle sums up Catherine's experience, which was not easy and not comfortable. In fact, if it were not for the generous care and 'merciful' actions of her extended whānau/family and friends, she may never have developed into the person with the vision she would bring to life. Living with those who lived the works of mercy especially the Callaghans at Coolock, had a profound impact on one so young. She learnt of God's infinite love and mercy for her. She received God's Mercy in her life and her response was to share it.<sup>1</sup>

#### "An act of merciful love

*is only really such when we are  
deeply convinced at the moment that we  
perform it that we are at the  
same time receiving mercy from the people  
who are accepting it from us"*

Pope John Paul II, Dives in Misericordia ~ Rich in Mercy  
Quoted by Carol Wheeler in ~ Catherine, A Reflection on Values from the Mercy Tradition

#### The key understanding of the word whānau is

to give birth, to give life,  
or to be born.

It denotes blood link with others  
and with the mother.

It provides a whakapapa,  
connected lineage or relationship  
and an identity  
that one does not earn but  
is graced with, given, gifted.<sup>2</sup>

#### On seeing the plight of many in Dublin, Catherine desired to share this love with them and built the first house of Mercy on Baggot Street, Dublin.

From the legacy of vision and finance she received from the Callaghans, Catherine built a House of Mercy for the shelter and education of poor women and children. Before ever considering or entering into religious life, within this house she understood whānau, bringing up her sister's children and providing shelter for women in distressing circumstances.

However, in the face of church and societal opposition and in order to protect and further the growing Mission of Mercy, she accepted the invitation to form a new religious Congregation. To prepare for her profession as a Sister of Mercy she looked for a group who held similar values and organised themselves in a way that most closely aligned to her vision for Mercy. In choosing the Presentation Sisters, she chose an order who believed in the idea of community, of identifying and living as one social and familial communal order whose work was with people and for people.<sup>3</sup>

"In a New Zealand context this is most closely defined as whānau, family."<sup>4</sup>

## Karakia

E te Atua Atawhai God of unending mercies:

We join as Whānau Mercy

to share our gifts to enrich other lives.

Bless us as we seek to be

bearers of mercy and hope to a broken world.

From the confines of our comfort zones,

save us from thinking the blessings we have

by birth and chance are ours by right.

Expand our aroha with the impulse of your love.

As we commit ourselves to acting locally,

show us the global impact of what we do.

Inspire us to stretch our minds and hearts

in the ministries we serve

to make space for those at the margins.

Remind us that Whānau Mercy's special gift

is the energy to embrace and befriend,

to welcome in those who are excluded.

Open our hearts to those who wait to come in.

Mauri ora. Amen. Inoi Taketake adapted

**"Whakapapa-based whānau is a diffuse unit**

**based on a common Whakapapa,**

**descent from a**

**shared ancestor or ancestors,**

**and within which certain responsibilities**

**and obligation are maintained.**

Customary concepts of Whānau are founded

on a set of underlying principles

which together comprise a whānau model.

The Whānau model can be transported

outside of the Whakapapa group

to other social groupings

to give rise to the kaupapa-based whānau."<sup>7</sup>

**To be whānau is to belong,  
to know you belong and to belong in a particular way.**

It provides an identity and a set of symbols, stories, whakapapa, and beliefs one can stand tall with, be proud of and be confident in. Whatever the circumstance, you know you can count unequivocally on this support and expect it.

**This is tautoko** – the support offered and provided because you belong to the whānau, you are the whānau.<sup>5</sup>

**Whānau is also used to describe  
a group of people who spend time together for a purpose  
or who share an identity due to a cause or shared work/focus.**

We might say being whānau is to be 'born into Mercy' and of Mercy. With the characteristics of the parent one can be or could be identified as having the "momo" (pronounced mor-mor) or likeness, appearance or "āhua" of Mercy, of Catherine or of the 'school'.

The 'momo' (type/variety/descendant with specific or similar characteristics) we could say, is a charism.<sup>6</sup>

**He Taonga tuku iho ~ A Charism is a gift  
the heart of the founder aglow in us ...**

*at one period of history, now beating in us  
in another day and age.*

*A **charism** is a living passion for peace, truth, healing,  
restoration, mercy ... for what is missing in our time.*

*To be kept alive a **charism** must be given away  
to gain life in its multiple expressions.* Joan Chittister

**Catherine imagined a society**

*where the oppressed, marginalised and excluded would find  
a central role and sense of belonging.*

*She could stand as a bridge between the rich and the poor,  
employing her own advantage and connection  
to advance the needs of the poor.*

*Catherine had a particular ability to address both  
immediate need in a practical way and address systemic issues  
which underpin those needs.*

*Catherine was an instigator of professional services  
to empower the powerless because of  
oppressive structures imposed on them.* Mary Reynolds rsm

**Mercy is an Energy of Inclusion, of Welcome**

*The most pressing issues of our day are likely to surface close to home. What's needed is  
"an energy of inclusion. of welcome; an energy of befriending those who are different,  
of reaching out to those who are excluded."*

Atawhai mai Atawhai atu Mission Resource Book 2014

*We all come with a gift in our hand designed to make the world a better place.* Joan Chittister

**With the highest identity being Whānau –**

there is an underlying assumption  
of the understanding of whānau.

This includes responsibilities –  
they are actually obligations,  
that is they are not duties or chores  
but understood deeply as an obligation.

One is drawn to an action because  
they know it is the right thing to do,  
or the right way to act, **it is 'tika'.**

The obligation comes through a commitment to unity,  
and to unity of purpose -  
not out of rank or an order or expectation.<sup>8</sup>

## Whakatauki

*Ma mua ka kite a muri. Ma muri ka ora a mua*  
*Those who lead give sight to those who follow.*  
*Those who follow give life to those who lead.*  
*Waiho i te toipoto kaula i te toiroa*  
*Let us keep close, not far apart.*

*“Business is not just business;  
the challenge is to ensure that what we do  
puts us in touch with our beginnings.  
Decision-making is a sacred task.*

*The process moves  
from karakia (the opening prayer)  
through mihi (the welcome to each participant)  
then to the business.”*

*Sir Eddie Durie*

**Mercy is bringing one's heart  
to the need of another,  
to the cry of the earth ...**

*“In order to do good we need memory,  
we need courage and we need creativity.*

*Yes, love does require a creative,  
concrete and ingenious attitude.*

*Good intentions and conventional formulas,  
so often used to appease our conscience,  
are not enough.*

*Let us help each other, all together,  
to remember that the other  
is not a statistic or a number.*

***The other has a face.” ...***

*“We are precious each and every one of us,  
irreplaceable...*

*A single individual is enough for hope to exist,  
and that individual can be you.”*

*“All it takes  
is one good person to restore **Hope**”*

*Pope Francis*

**Each one of us is, or aspires to be,  
the living embodiment of whānau mercy**

as much as ourselves gathered or ourselves  
in ministry. Values and vision apply to each of us,  
from the board chair, to the casual volunteer.

We are here because we believe in Mercy and  
in Whānau Mercy to which we have committed  
in some form. In this way decisions are clearer.

We make decisions based on **tikanga Mercy**,  
the Mercy Way putting the values into action,  
being in mission', enhancing mission effectiveness.<sup>9</sup>

## Shared Mercy Values

*are the fundamental beliefs  
at the heart of Mercy action.*

*They make Mercy visible  
through how we are  
in relationship ...*

*the quality of our presence and service.*

*Atawhai mai Atawhai atu Mission Resource Book 2014*

***“Kindness - Atawhai in Maori, is not only our name but should be our defining characteristic”***

*Dennis Horton, Imaging Mercy Today Nov 2018*



## Karakia

### E te Atua Atawhai God of Mercy

God of many names,

We are people of many backgrounds, talents and place ... We are united in Mercy by a spirit and a tradition born in a house in Dublin, now spread to the outer reaches of the earth and the inner recesses of the heart.

### As Whanau Mercy

in spirit and story we commit ourselves to preserving the best of the past, fostering the best for the future.

### May Catherine's original vision

and the wairua of our founders inspire us today; not to do what they did then, but to be where they would be if they were here now standing in our shoes.

**We thank you for the gifts of time** given, insights and abundant wisdom shared at this table for Mercy mission. Bless us as we leave our gathering with your gift of peace and a safe return to our home and whānau. Amen

**Aroha: love, compassion.** Aroha is 'in the presence' and in relationship, not distant or apart. It is reflected in our work which is done with people, for people not indirectly and unconnected. *Catherine McAuley speaks of "great tenderness in all things".*

**Whānaungatanga:** To cause, make, create relationship, to enable belonging and inclusion. What we do builds community, an experience of being part of a human family, not a group or organisation, but a warmth, a welcome and a commonality of expression, history and language. This principle acknowledges one's story, the inter-relatedness of other stories and whakapapa. It listens, holds, honours and retells story. It can even inform the assignment roles according to the best outcomes for the person and whanau group. This spirit keeps all safe.

**Kaitiakitanga:** A kaitiaki is one who guards, guides and ensures spiritual, cultural and personal safety of people, a cause or group of people. In the traditional sense for Maori it could be an ancestor, or spirit related to the Iwi, Hapu, whānau, or whenua on which they lived. Kaitiakitanga is about ensuring the long term wellbeing of Earth and of whakapapa.<sup>12</sup>

## Tikanga Mercy

### *The strength of whanau is Tikanga.*

Tikanga challenges us with clarity of our Mercy why.

**It emboldens us to be unconventional, counter-cultural and creative in meeting the poorest and most vulnerable and fearless in carrying God's Mercy to our world.**

*"Catherine always stood midway between vulnerability and possibility"*

**Tikanga is a philosophy**, a world view that expresses itself in ritual and behaviour ~ the safe way, the right way because of this world view. So we might describe Tikanga Māori as the expression of a Māori world view in behaviour and ritual.

**By using the concept of Tikanga Mercy**, we seek to describe the Mercy World View that leads to a set of beliefs expressed in behaviour and ritual.

**As manifestations of the culture, Tikanga Mercy encapsulates a Mercy ethos and philosophy. Embedded within our cultural practices are the values and beliefs of ngā tupuna Mercy, our ancestors in Mercy.**<sup>10</sup>

*Values that underpin Tikanga Mercy can be expressed in three concepts/ways of being and acting as they apply to Mercy.*<sup>11</sup>



## Atawhai - Mercy

is an expression of the human spirit that motivates and makes real in the world our values in order to make a positive difference in the quality of people's lives.

Atawhai Mai Atawhai Atū Resource Book 2014

**Catherine speaks of "great tenderness in all things" and Pope Francis a revolution of tenderness:**

"Tenderness means to use our eyes to see the other, to listen to the children, the poor, those who are afraid of the future.

To listen to the silent cry of Earth our common home ...

Tenderness means to use our hands and our heart

to comfort the other, to take care of those in need ..."

Quotes 1-12, Kerr-Bell, R. (2018). Whanau Mercy. White paper circulated for educational purposes.  
Tiaki Manatū, Ngā Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa