

# Mother of Mercy no heroine for faint hearts

Nga mihi atawhai - greetings to all in Mercy! It's May again, and the large bell at St Mary's College next door reminds me as I sit down to lunch that this is Mary's month, as the Angelus is rung. I have the sense that not every bell-ringer appreciates that there are prayers to go with each set of peals. I'm scrambling some days to squeeze in the three Aves and the invocation that precedes each one, recalling the great events of salvation, from the promise of a Saviour and Mary's 'yes', to the birth of Jesus and the unfolding of grace that dates from that moment when the whole of human history was changed.

It's fitting that a school that bears Mary's name keeps the tradition of the Angelus alive, a prayer that reminded generations of illiterate medieval Christians of a gospel story they couldn't read. It's appropriate, too, that a Mercy college continues to honour Our Lady as Catherine McAuley expected, urging her sisters to have 'the warmest and most affectionate devotion to her, regarding her in a special manner as their Mother.'

The young artist who captured Mary in her design for the stained glass window that beams down from the large cross in the new gym at St Mary's College says her inspiration came from the college song:

'Our colour's blue – that's for Our Lady,  
Our Mother, model, guide and friend;  
A touch of red speaks of our caring,  
The joys that we together spend.'

It was an interesting decision on the part of school authorities, to set an icon more likely in chapels and churches, within the context of a school gymnasium. Perhaps the image should rather have been of Our Lady of Victories than the Mother of Mercy. Or maybe the hope is that Mary will inspire a stronger team spirit, a commitment to fair play, an approach to sport that emphasises collaboration rather

## Rediscovering the gospel's joy

Mary, Virgin and Mother,  
you stood at the foot of the cross  
with unyielding faith,  
to receive the joyful comfort of the resurrection,  
and joined the disciples in awaiting the Spirit  
so that the evangelising church might be born.

Obtain for us now a new ardour born of the resurrection,  
that we may bring to all the Gospel of life  
which triumphs over death.

Star of the new evangelisation,  
help us to bear radiant witness to communion,  
service, ardent and generous faith,  
justice and love of the poor,  
that the joy of the Gospel  
may reach to the ends of the earth.  
Amen. Alleluia!

- adapted from Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium, Joy of the Gospel*

## Imaging Mercy Today



YEAR 11 artist Christienne Dadula holds her prize-winning design for a stained glass window in the new gym of St Mary's College. With her are Bishop Pat Dunn and senior student Eugenie Motulalo.

than competition. There is certainly an acknowledgement here that the Christian ethos is to be found across the whole spectrum of school activities, and not just confined to the RE syllabus.

The challenge for devotion to Mary these days is to find a lens that casts light on the great issues of our day. No one does this better than Pope Francis in his recent letter to the whole church, *The Joy of the Gospel*. In the very last paragraph, he urges the church to adopt a 'Marian' style to its work of spreading the good news. "Whenever we look to Mary, we come to believe once again in the revolutionary nature of love and tenderness. In her we see that humility and tenderness are not virtues of the weak but of the strong, who need not treat others poorly in order to feel important themselves," Pope Francis writes.

"Contemplating Mary, we realise that she who praised God for 'bringing down the mighty from their thrones' and for 'sending the rich away empty' is also the one who brings a homely warmth to our pursuit of justice." Mary, says the pope, is "the woman of prayer and work in Nazareth, and she is also Our Lady of Help, who sets out from her town 'with haste' to be of service to others." It's this interplay of justice and tenderness, of contemplation and concern for others that persuades the church to look to Mary as a model of evangelisation, he concludes.

May Mary the Mother of Mercy inspire another generation of young women and men to find their joy in channeling their skills and energies to making a difference in a world where gospel light waits to shine. —Dennis Horton