

Imaging Mercy Today

Mercy's mission both local and global

Ngā mihi atawhai - greetings to all in mercy!
Responding to a powhiri of welcome earlier this year, Mary Reynolds rsm, executive director of *Mercy International Association*, told a governance seminar in Auckland that while not able to speak the language of tangata whenua, she too was a person of the land.

"Beneath the valley where our family lived for generations was a little river that linked up with the Shannon. As a child, the river whispered to me. The message I got was that I could sail that river to the Shannon, and then to the Atlantic, and from there to the seven great seas of the world." Little wonder that Mercy International's vision today aims at enabling Catherine's founding spirit to reach across the world, channelling local resources to the global needs of our day!

One of the great truths discovered in our digitally enhanced age is that humans share a common destiny. It's the same air we breathe – even as we add to its pollution; the water we drink is from the same irreplaceable reservoirs that planet Earth holds for all. New Zealanders were among victims of the tsunami that has lately engulfed parts of Samoa and Tonga; Kiwi families grieve with their Pacific counterparts for loved ones. And staff and students at our Mercy colleges have seen at first-hand how vulnerable life for their Pasifika sisters and brothers can be.

Faced with global demands, there are limits to what any one of us can do. As Deirdre Mullan rsm,

who heads *Mercy Global Concern* at the United Nations, has noted, we can't be expected to fix the whole world all at once; "but we can stretch out to mend the part of the world within our reach." Her advice is that we work locally, but always with an eye to the global, "because we know that the human spirit was never meant to live without hope. We believe that another world is possible."

Global awareness certainly means that we can't simply keep on responding as we have in the past, since the demands are constantly changing. On the day the tsunami struck Carmel College principal Kath Deady left for Samoa, with plans to spend some of the school holidays mentoring colleagues at Paul VI College, and sharing resources her own community had bought. Instead, after an unscheduled stop in Fiji, her first task in Samoa was to donate blood. Mercy's call is discerned in the news of the day.

Yet it would be a mistake to think that global responses always involve huge distances. As Mary Reynolds reminded us, the most pressing issues of our day are likely to surface close to home. What's needed most from Mercy today is "an energy of inclusion, of welcome; an energy of befriending those who are different, of reaching out to those who are excluded." And to find that challenge, she said, "we don't have to go any further than the doors of our own ministries." Can we see who waits to come in?

- Dennis Horton

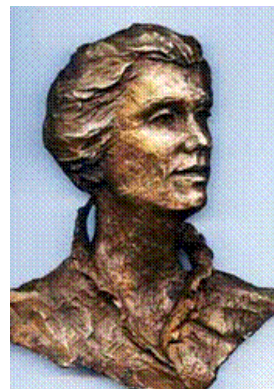
He Inoi - Prayer

Energised to embrace

E Te Atua aroha o nga mea katoa,
God, great lover of all that lives:
your mercy extends to Earth's ends
and nothing lies beyond the sweep of your gaze.
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 horizons 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 tent pegs
to make space for those at the margins.
Remind us that Mercy's special gift
is the energy to embrace and befriend,
to welcome those who are excluded.
Open our hearts to those who wait to come in.

Mauri ora. Amen



Catherine
- in her
own words

Appeal to Limerick

'I hope you will soon begin to spread.
Never give more than two sisters, and let
your agreement be that when four enter,
one of yours is to return. What renewed
animation and strength it would give...

'I have just had a letter from Galway.
They are in great want of assistance and
must take a nice young postulant, but she
must be educated in the modern style - it
would serve them greatly just now. You are
such a good look out; perhaps you would
cast your eye on one...' (Baggot St, Sep 1840)

The difference Mercy makes

Rejoice with us! After 20 years of living and working in Wiri, we are awake to new possibilities and look forward to doing what we have always done as Sisters of Mercy, just doing it differently.

Our ministry of service in Wiri which began in 1988 has, with the passage of time, evolved, developed and changed. The needs, too, have changed, as have the number of agencies and people responding to the needs.

We are also encouraged to see new initiatives around Wiri and Manukau generally.

Over the years, we have been blessed with many wonderful co-workers and volunteers. We have appreciated, too, the opportunities to engage with many of the people who contribute to the works of Mercy in the name of Nga Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa.

It is therefore important to us to let you know of some decisions we made earlier this year.

The fruit of our prayer, reflection and discussions is our decision to continue to share our lives with the people, families and community of Wiri.



Each month this year we're inviting the manager of one of our Mercy ministries to highlight the difference Mercy makes in their special field. This month's perspective comes from Sister MARGARET MARTIN, who shares with her colleague Sister Anne Hurley a ministry in the South Auckland community of Wiri.

We will also continue to respond to people and community needs and to work with other organizations as required. However, we are relinquishing all contracts held by Sisters of Mercy Wiri, both funding and employment.

We expect by the end of 2009 to have completed the transition process from the Wiri Centre from where we have operated for the last 10 years.

We are supported by the Leadership Team of the Congregation and by the Sisters of Mercy Wiri Trust Board (formerly Sisters of Mercy Wiri Ltd) which will continue and will provide a legal entity by which we can respond to people and community needs as required.

We are not moving away or winding up. We are choosing to stay in Wiri and to continue our journey with the many people, friends and organisations which we have come to know and respect.

From 2010, we will be based from where we live in Wiri.

In the words of our foundress, Catherine McAuley, "we have ever relied in divine Providence and shall continue to do so."

Time for men to say violence is not OK

White Ribbon ambassador Ruben Wiki knows about family violence at first hand.

"I grew up in a house where my mother was beaten by her partner (not my father), and I know how scary that can be.

"I want to do what I can, to help make sure this doesn't happen to other mothers and children."

Passionate about supporting efforts to end family violence, the legendary League player has joined this year's White Ribbon campaign as its first National Ambassador.

As a husband and father of two, Ruben says he is always aware of the values he models for his children.

"What men say and do, and how we behave around our children and partners, has lasting effects.

"It takes teamwork to raise a family," says Ruben, "and it will take teamwork to create a more peaceful, respectful society for our children to grow up in.

"We can help by speaking up when men say or do things that we wouldn't want our sisters, wives or children to experience.



WHITE RIBBON ambassador Ruben Wiki.....'what men say and do and how we behave has lasting effects.'

"We need to say it's not OK. If we come across violence in our families or our friends' families, we need to be able to help them to get help.

"Let's make it our problem as well, and not just ignore it," he advises.

White Ribbon Day, 25 November, is aimed at raising awareness of

men's violence against women, which in New Zealand mostly takes place within families.

In this country an average of 14 women are killed each year by their partners or ex-partners.

Each year there are over 3500 convictions recorded against men for assaults on women, and one in five women will experience sexual assaults or sexual interference at some point in their lives.

White Ribbon Day was started by a men's movement in Canada in 1991, and has been officially adopted by the UN as its International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

The campaign was introduced to New Zealand by UNIFEM (the UN Development Fund for Women).

Men wear the white ribbon to show they will not condone or remain silent about such violence.

The campaign celebrates the many men who are willing to show leadership and commitment to promoting safe, healthy relationships within families. It encourages men to challenge each other on attitudes and behaviours that are abusive.