

Mercy facilities focus on end-of-life care

Mercy's approach to end-of-life care was the focus of two workshops attended by more than 40 palliative and aged care personnel in Hamilton and Auckland last month.

The half-day workshops at Atawhai Assisi Home

and Hospital and at Mercy Hospice were led by Fr Michael McCabe, who has just ended 11 years as director of the Nathaniel Centre for Catholic Bioethics in Wellington.

The sessions were aimed at ensuring that the care of those who are

nearing death in Mercy's hospice and aged care facilities is aligned with the key principles on which Mercy healthcare is based.

Participants in the workshops included managers, clinical and pastoral care staff from Mercy healthcare facilities, as well as health professionals from local DHBs.

The special focus of the sessions was the Liver-

pool Care Pathway, regarded internationally as providing best practice for those whose lives are drawing to an end.

LCP is now being implemented at Mercy Hospice Auckland and Mercy's two aged care facilities in Eilerslie and Hamilton.

Developed several years ago in Britain, some aspects of LCP drew criticism last year in the

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Te Hononga Atawhai

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Mercy in action for planet Earth

Sisters of Mercy and their companions and friends in New Zealand will have the chance to reflect on their role in caring for the Earth, in a one-day workshop to be launched later this year.

The programme has been developed by a co-ordinating group that includes staff of Pou Atawhai Centre for Mission, as well as individual sisters concerned for the planet's future.

The workshop takes a look at current global and local conditions relating to environmental sustainability and social justice.

It also explores the spiritual and emotional impact of present patterns of consumption and distribution of resources.

"Our aim is to highlight the spiritual and moral basis for Mercy's growing commitment to sustain-

ability," says Katrina Fabish rsm, who leads the group. "We're seeking to show why care for Papatuanuku is integral to Mercy's mission of keeping hope alive in our world today."

Featured is an interactive process, enabling participants to put themselves in the story of an unfolding universe.

Also included are snippets from locally produced DVDs, exploring the impact of climate change in Aotearoa.

The first workshop is planned for August 13 and will be held at St Mary's Convent in Ponsonby.

But organizers expect the day will be offered in other venues throughout New Zealand, adapted to the needs of individual ministries or communities.

For more details, call Teresa Anderson rsm (09) 360 8009 or email tanderson@somauck.org.nz

O'Shea Shield winners



WELLINGTON'S St Mary's College team holding the O'Shea Shield, with Bishop Peter Cullinane and one of their teachers, Judy Houlahan. (Photo - Wel-Com)

Mercy's two Wellington colleges took top prizes at this year's O'Shea Shield competition, held among the 17 Catholic colleges of the Wellington and Palmerston North dioceses.

St Mary's College won the O'Shea Shield, named after the archbishop who agreed to sponsor the contest 65 years ago. Runner-up was St Catherine's College, which won the Viard Cup. St Patrick's College, Silverstream, ran third.

Held in New Plymouth, the weekend began with all teams debating whether 'humanity is moving towards a more just global society'. Other sections included religious

drama, impromptu speeches, religious questions and scripture reading.

The St Mary's College team aimed at doing their best, but felt as the weekend progressed that they were not in the lead.

"We could not believe our ears at prize-giving when it was announced that we had won the shield," one of the team told *Mercy Focus*.

"We had a five-hour trip home, but the miles flew by with the joy of winning. When we arrived back at St Mary's, we were welcomed with the song 'We are the Champions' blaring loudly from our principal's car.

"It was an unforgettable moment!"

Matariki Day shows learning can be fun

Students at Carmel College this month welcomed Matariki, the Maori New Year, with a lunch-time celebration that combined up-to-date health information with traditional Maori stick games and flax weaving.

Four students of Maori descent helped to present the event, as part of their role as Tuakana (older sister) Leaders at the Mercy college in Milford.

After weeks of training, they demonstrated their skill at mau rakau (stick games), flax weaving and poi making and invited others to try their hand.

Stalls featured Maori and Asian health promotions, ACC injury prevention, Mu Torere (a Maori version of tai chi) and a photo display of the pilgrimage made earlier this year by Carmel's senior students to Ho-

kianga in North Auckland, where Bishop Pompallier began his first Catholic mission to this country.

A mini bake stall raised funds to support the work of Te Waipuna Puawai, the Mercy community development centre which supports low-income women and their families in some of Auckland's struggling suburbs.

On hand to welcome participants were Carmel's principal, Kath Deady, and Tony Harkins who chairs the school's Board of Proprietors. "I'm delighted at the atmosphere and the enthusiasm shown at this event," Mr Harkins said.

"Exposure to culture in this way is ideal, because it allows students to be active and involved."

Deputy principal Trish Murfitt, who is also director of student achievement at the college, was delighted



CARMEL COLLEGE students show kete filled with tips for healthy living, distributed at this month's Matariki Day celebration.



STUDENTS of St Mary's College in Wellington show the changing trends in uniforms during the school's 160 years. Archbishop John Dew and college principal Mrs Mary Cook led a liturgy to mark the event on Catholic Schools Day last month. Guests included two former principals, Sisters of Mercy Joan Bridgman and de Porres Flannigan. Further celebrations are planned for September 8, the day when the first school opened on the site in 1850.

to see students enjoying themselves. "This is the first time some of our students have been exposed to authentic Maori culture.

"It's been a great opportunity for our Tuakana leaders to experience the organizing of a large lunchtime event, and the sense of fulfillment in seeing their peers enjoying themselves."

Parent Carol Hansen agreed. "It's been brilliant for other girls to see such a slice of Maori culture, and for the other promotional stalls to support the event as well."

Kaiarataki Rangi Davis, who helped to coach the four Tuakana leaders, was delighted with their role. "Three of the four have not been brought up in a Maori world, but they've been very keen to learn and to share their insights.

"A key focus of Matariki is to bring ancient wisdom into the present, and this Maori New Year is a wonderful time to start."

End-of-life care priority for Mercy facilities

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Catholic press in that country. "We saw a need to be proactive," explained mission director Dennis Horton, who coordinated last month's workshops.

"Our aim has been to see that LCP in our facilities is aligned to Mercy principles of end-of-life care, anticipating the critics even before they voice concern."

In his presentation, Fr McCabe highlighted Catholic teaching relat-

ing to the sacredness of all human life and to decisions needed when treatments are judged to be burdensome or intrusive. He also reviewed current perspectives on the complex issues of nutrition and hydration for patients who are dying.

In endorsing the way LCP has been implemented in this country, Fr McCabe indicated that the place of spirituality and culture will be acknowledged more strongly as the

roll-out of LCP continues in the New Zealand context.

The two workshops included a summary of a recent publication of *Catholic Health Australia*, on palliative care in Catholic facilities. Published with church approval last year, the resource has useful advice for people wanting to develop a future health care plan, as a more flexible option to 'advance directives' or 'living wills'.

Hindu, Muslim to share insights on faith

A series of interfaith talks gets under way this month at Mercy Spirituality Centre in Auckland, aimed at better understanding among religious and ethnic groups.

Presenters in the six-week series include representatives of Auckland's Hindu, Muslim and Jewish communities. Others will focus on Maori and Pacific spiritualities and the Anglican-Catholic dialogue.

The series concludes with a session by Sister of the Missions Susan Smith, who has lived and worked in countries as different as Ethiopia and Bangladesh.

The series was devised by Valerie Jabir, programme coordinator, with support from Sr Rita Vessey, manager of the Mercy Spirituality Centre in Epsom.

"I'm hoping the talks will help to break down some of the preconceived ideas we have about people in other religions," says Valerie.

"The ideas fed by the media are often false – such as all Muslims being terrorists."

She recalls teaching English to migrants some years ago. "One was a Muslim woman who used to get



INTERFAITH series planner Valerie Jabir... breaking down false ideas.

so upset by stories in the press. 'We're peace-loving people,' she'd say. 'I can't stand how terrorists give our faith such a bad name'."

In her own street now, Valerie notes, there are people of many different nationalities, with hardly a Pakeha among them. "It's a very friendly place, and we all say 'hello', but I want to know more.

"I want to know what it's like for Hindus coming to live in New Zealand. What does this do to their culture and beliefs? How does meeting with people from different parts of the world affect their faith?"

Finding a Hindu speaker for the series took longer than any of the others, she admits. "I tried phoning

the local temple, but there were language difficulties. So I went and met someone there.

"It's the little things that catch you out, like taking your shoes off before entering the temple. That day I'd worn big zip-up boots, and there was such a kerfuffle to take them off!"

As a child in post-war London, she had watched people of different cultures coming to live in her neighbourhood – Jamaicans, West Indians, Pakistanis.

"I can remember being friends with the only Indian girl at school. I can recall playing with her on the jungle gym and others shouting, 'If you hold hands with her, you'll turn black!' So we kept holding hands in defiance."

She came to New Zealand in the 1970s, went back to England for a "short stay" that lasted 12 years. "But I considered New Zealand my home – it changes you. When I returned, it was amazing how many different cultures were here that hadn't been here before."

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Mercy centre models care for Papatuanuku

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kind of practice that's needed."

Careful planning resulted in a fabulous Papatuanuku Day, says Puamiria.

The team travelled in two vans, rather than separate vehicles, with talk on the way about shared transport and optimal tyre pressures.

"We took our lunch, set up a possie, and started picking up rubbish. It's not a pleasant job. I can't remember how many bags we filled, but it's quite alarming – particularly the bottles and broken glass which make the area unsafe for people to use.

"You can tell where people drink in public places, from the debris that accumulates. There were loads of things. We didn't try to pull out the shopping trolleys; the council comes in and does that from time to time."

After the clean-up came a picnic, on recycled paper plates. Then back to the centre to talk about practice at the personal and organizational level, with action plans for each TWP team. Already, some strategies are in place.

"At the start of each term, we



TWP staff Petra Lawrence (left) and Sister of Mercy Marie Brown with bags of rubbish collected from Glen Innes stream.

begin with an introduction to participants – talking about what we stand for and what we value. Petra, our receptionist, now goes to each of those orientation sessions and talks about our recycling practices, highlighting the notices on our

bins and the reasons for them.

"Our hope is that those who come into our centre will start to practise in the same way."

Youngsters at TWP's early childhood centre are getting the message as well. "Schools do this quite effectively now – young people are educating their parents. We're supporting that kind of movement here."

TWP's staff are encouraged to use reusable bags when they go shopping. "It's about modeling," says Puamiria. "It's important for us to walk the talk."

There's more to care for Papatuanuku than just getting your hands dirty, says Puamiria. "It's about sustainable living – things like recycling and reusing, watching our ecological footprint, both as individuals and as an organisation.

"What was really great about Earth Day this year was our focus on whakapapa – on the story of where we come from.

"For Maori especially, it's a way of reinforcing our connection to the physical realm and our interdependence on all living things. This makes our links with the Earth really personal."

Caring for Earth needs dirty hands

Mercy people know that you can't care for Mother Earth without getting your hands dirty.

So staff at Te Waipuna Puawai, the Mercy community development centre in Ellerslie, spent Earth Day this year working in their wetland and clearing debris from a local stream.

Earth Day falls near the anniversary of the first Sisters of Mercy arriving in New Zealand – 160 years ago this year.

So the TWP team marked the event with a commemorative plaque in the wetland, dedicating a grove of native trees to the eight pioneer sisters who reached these shores in April 1850.

"Care of the Earth is absolutely fundamental to what we do," says



STAFF of Te Waipuna Puawai gather with Maori kaumatua and friends to bless the plaque in their wetland grove, honouring the first Sisters of Mercy to arrive in Aotearoa in 1850.

TWP manager Puamiria Maaka. "So we always merge these two events. It's a happy coincidence that allows us to bring Papatuanuku and Mercy together.

"This year, we did our bit of planting in the wetland, as we always

seem to do. But we also went to Glen Innes and cleaned out a local stream. Because it's not just our backyard we're concerned about; it's our community, as well. And we want to model to others the

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'Young mums' graduate just needed a push

There were days when Charleen King-Stevens found it hard to get out of bed in the mornings. Having just left school, with a one-year-old of her own, she was at home, battling depression.

But that changed when her old school counsellor put her in touch with a Young Mums pilot scheme at Te Waipuna Puawai, the Mercy community development centre in Ellerslie.

Since then, Charleen has graduated from the Young Mums scheme at TWP, done a polytech course in horticulture, and spent the past six months on a WINZ-funded project, caring for the wetlands adjoining the Ellerslie centre.

This month, she completes a Foundational Studies course at Manukau Institute of Technology, and is looking forward to beginning a BA degree that she hopes will lead to a secondary teaching career.

She plans to combine part-time tertiary studies in English and History with helping to run a playgroup for young mums. Part of the Tamaki Transformation project, the playgroup involvement will include on-the-job training, with time for study as well.

While on the horticulture course in Rawene, Charleen learned to take



CHARLEEN King-Stevens.. 'you just need someone to say you can do other things.'

cuttings, grow vegetables from seed and make compost.

"We lived off the land, it was lots of fun – and it was free. I was

close to my mum, who lives in Opononi. It made me realize that in time I want to return home to the north to live."

Since December, Charleen has spent 30 hours a week in TWP's wetlands, planting flax cuttings and doing general maintenance. She has kept newly planted native shrubs and grasses from being overrun with kikuyu.

On Earth Day in April, she joined the centre's staff to plant 30 new flax and cabbage trees.

Her job resulted from a new WINZ venture with a focus on youth, offering work experience leading to employment or further study. "This meant we could pay Charleen," said TWP manager Puamiria Maaka. "The shift from being on a benefit to being employed was great to see!

"We thought we'd be supporting Charleen into horticulture. But she's figured out she wants to be a high school teacher – and that's fabulous. We're behind her all the way."

Support from Te Waipuna Puawai has made a huge difference, says Charleen. "They've helped me so much. I'd probably still be at home on the benefit, not knowing what to do.

"It's the practical push you need, someone else to tell you that you can do other things."