

Karanga Atawahai

Weavers of hope in Ordinary Time

*Kotahi te aho ka whati,
ki te kāpuia e kore e whati*

One strand of flax is easy to break, but many strands woven together will stand strong



In the Catholic calendar, we have now entered what is known as “Ordinary Time.” To those unfamiliar with the language of the Church, that can sound as though this season is somehow less important, a pause between Easter and Christmas.

However Ordinary Time is not about things being ordinary in the sense of insignificant. It is about the ongoing rhythm of faith lived out in everyday life. It is where our belief becomes action and practice.

There are similarities between Ordinary Time and Mercy.

Mercy is an active response to need. It is love made visible not only in extraordinary acts, but in the daily choices that shape communities and relationships: listening carefully, welcoming generously, making courageous decisions, accompanying those who are struggling, caring for our common home, and responding practically where there is hurt or injustice.

Much of this work can go unnoticed if we are not paying attention. Whether it is a board decision shaped by compassion and justice or a teacher who notices a child is struggling. The everyday acts shape who we are and how we show up. They shape what Mercy looks like in our communities. Not through spectacle, but through people who continue, day after day, to respond with compassion, courage, and hope.

Recently, Pope Leo XIV reflected “With the same faith as Mary, let us become “weavers of hope” in our world, sharing who we are and what we have, so that the presence of Jesus may grow among us and his Kingdom take shape.” This is part of the invitation of Ordinary Time, to remember that the work of Mercy is rarely separate from ordinary life. It is found within it, in the practical and compassionate responses to human need that quietly help build a more hopeful world.

St Catherine’s College wins O’Shea Shield competition

Congratulations to St Catherine’s College, Kilbirnie, winners of the 2026 O’Shea Shield Speech and Drama Competition for Catholic colleges across the Wellington Archdiocese and Palmerston North Diocese.

Hosted by Sacred Heart College, Lower Hutt, from 14–16 May, the competition brought together more than 290 students from 17 colleges. Students competed across a wide range of categories, including impromptu and prepared speech, oratory, debating, religious questions, drama, and Scripture reading in both te reo Māori and English.

To all the students who participated, the staff who supported them, and the many coaches, whānau, and volunteers who worked behind the scenes, congratulations on your dedication and hard mahi. Events such as these showcase not only talent and excellence, but also the commitment, encouragement, and countless hours of preparation that often go unseen.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to making this year’s O’Shea Shield such a successful celebration of faith, learning, leadership, and community.



Image: Jess Doherty

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From the Mercy Whānau

Voices of Mercy

Voices of Mercy is an opportunity to hear from those leading and serving across our ministries, sharing glimpses of what it means to live, lead, and carry Mercy in our time. This month we hear from Deboarah Brosnahan, principal at Villa Maria College.



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*The last book I read was... The Dust Child.
Mercy to me is God's love and compassion for each of us.
In our ministry in education right now, we are called to provide hope for our rangatahi in a world that seems broken.
People might be surprised to know as a student I knitted garments for a shop to sell.
A leadership challenge I am holding is supporting staff through the excessive demands of the change programme, ensuring they remain optimistic, true to themselves and our educational vision and continue to love what they do.
What gives me hope is working with our rangatahi, their faith and commitment to making the world a better place, and the local solutions to the complex global issues.*

Catherine McAuley Symposium

We are very pleased to see registrations coming in for the Catherine McAuley Symposium. You can find our more and view the speakers [here](#). As part of the registration process, a limited number of rooms have been secured at a nearby accommodation option at a discounted rate. These will be available on a first come, first served basis, so early registration is encouraged.

The Symposium offers an opportunity to explore more widely what it means to be a religious organisation in a changing global environment. Particular emphasis will be given to the significance and contribution of First Nations perspectives within religious organisations.

Paper proposals are still being accepted and we encourage them from across a broad range of contexts. We invite those working, researching, or reflecting in this space, within and beyond Mercy, to consider contributing a workshop or paper. A concurrent student programme is also planned for students aged 16 years and over, and we welcome any workshops for this programme as well.

The committee will review all submissions at the end of each month. You can submit paper proposals [here](#) for either the main sessions or the student sessions.



[REGISTRATION FORM](#)

Heritage Webinar Series

The Path to the First House of Mercy 1827



A new Heritage Webinar Series from Mercy International Association has been rolled out, exploring the story and context leading to the founding of the first House of Mercy in 1827, as we journey toward the 200th anniversary of the first House of Mercy in 2027.

These will be led by Head of Heritage and Spirituality Caroline Thompson. They are live at 11:30pm NZ time but we encourage you to register and a recording will be sent out to you. The next two webinars are:

Webinar Two - Poverty in Catherine McAuley's Time at 11.30pm on Wednesday 24th June 2026. Click here to [register](#).

Webinar Three - The History of Baggot Street at 11.30pm on Wednesday 22nd July 2026. Click here to [register](#).

You can read more about the series [here](#).

Mercy International Association Opening Doors Book club

Opening Doors Book Club

The first book that we will feature is.....

AMERICAN HOPE
WHAT POPE LEO XIV MEANS FOR THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD
CHRISTOPHER LAMB

Let's get reading!

MERCY INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

www.mercyworld.org

Mercy International Association Opening Doors is starting a book club as a way of fostering connection and formation across the global Mercy Whānau. The first book is *American Hope* by Christopher Lamb. If you want to read more and join in you can do so [here](#).

Why formation matters

Answering the Call of Mercy



Governance in a Whānau Mercy ministry is not only about oversight, compliance, and business plans. It is about the katitiakitanga of mission, Catholic identity, Mercy values, and our commitments within the context of Aotearoa New Zealand.

For this reason, formation is not an optional addition to governance; it is foundational to it. Formation enables directors and leaders to understand not only what they do, but more importantly why they do it. It connects us to the mission we have inherited, the values that guide our decisions, and the communities we are called to serve.

Those who serve on our boards have responded to a call to place their gifts, experience, wisdom, and leadership at the service of Mercy. Formation honours that commitment by supporting directors to deepen their understanding of the mission entrusted to their care and their role in carrying it forward.

Through formation, directors deepen their understanding of the Mercy charism, Catholic identity, how to embed a Te Tiriti o Waitangi commitment within our ministries, and the responsibilities that accompany leadership within a ministry of the broader Church. It provides a shared language, framework, and sense of purpose that supports effective governance and faithful decision-making.

Formation is not simply about acquiring knowledge or ticking a box. It is about fostering whanaungatanga: connection to the Gospel, to the Mercy tradition, to one another, and to the people and communities our ministries serve. It helps those who have answered the call to Mercy governance remain grounded in aroha and the purpose of their service and ensures that Mercy continues to be lived authentically, faithfully, and with integrity in the ministries entrusted to our care.

WMM Aotearoa Hīkoi coming up

Planning is underway for the WMM hīkoi beginning at Waitangi on October 28th until the 31st October. A pilgrimage that lands us in what is often referred to as the "Cradle of Catholicism in Aotearoa", residing in Pawarenga a small community region in the North Hokianga and part of the Te Tai-Tokerau (Northland) as we explore our Mercy beginnings on this whenua.

We will be asking each ministry organisation that is part of Whānau Mercy Ministries to identify two participants from governance and operations to come together for a shared encounter and experience.



Conversation with Catherine McAuley

On June 16th from 7-8 pm join Fr Patrick Bridgman, Administrator of Sacred Heart Cathedral Parish in Wellington who has strong Mercy connections for this reflective webinar where we will imagine a conversation with Catherine McAuley.

What wisdom might Catherine McAuley have for us about mercy, courage, and responding to the needs of our time? This webinar invites participants into a reflective and practical exploration of Catherine's vision and the enduring spirit of Mercy.

We will have an opportunity to consider how her way of seeing the world can continue to shape our leadership, mission, and compassionate action today.

Find out more here including the teams meeting details and add event to your calendar.

[More information](#)

Mercy Alliance webinars

Mercy Alliance which includes Whānau Mercy Ministries, Mercy Ministry Companions, Mercy Care and Mercy Partners, works collaboratively to offer formation opportunities. These opportunities also create space to come together, build relationships, and connect with others involved in MPJP's in Australia.

These are not able to be recorded, so please attend if you are able. We are organising two webinars for 2026:

Listen deeply, engage the heart.... and get the job done: exploring contemporary approaches to Mission Discernment

Monday June 15, from 3.00pm – 4.30pm, NZ time, led by Pip McIlroy, Group Director, Mission and Pastoral Care, Mercy Health Australia, who will develop further the seminar she led in 2025 on discernment.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Engaging with ethical issues in ministry governance and leadership

Thursday October 22, from 3.00pm – 4.30pm, NZ time, led by Dan Fleming, National Director, Ethics – St Vincents, who will explore ethical issues in ministry governance and leadership.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Human dignity in a changing world

In his first encyclical, Magnifica Humanitas ("Magnificent Humanity"), Pope Leo XIV invites us to reflect on what it means to remain truly human in a rapidly changing world. While addressing the challenges of artificial intelligence and technological change, the heart of the document is not technology but humanity itself.

Pope Leo reminds us that every person possesses an inherent dignity that can never be reduced to data, productivity, or efficiency. He calls us to build for the common good, ensuring that innovation serves people rather than the other way around, and to remain attentive to the voices of those who are poor, vulnerable, and excluded.

In a Mercy context, his message is a timely reminder that our response to change must always be guided by compassion, justice, and the sacred worth of every person.

[Read the encyclical here](#)

[Other resources](#)



MERCY ECHOES
Official Podcast of
Mercy International Association

Episode Twelve:
Anna Burke RSM on
The Living Image
Returning to the Heart

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In Episode Twelve of Mercy Echoes, Sister Anna Burke joins Brenda Drumm to discuss her newly published book, *The Living Image*.

Drawing on her experience in education, faith development, chaplaincy, and scripture reflection, Sister Anna explores the importance of returning to the heart as the place where we encounter both ourselves and God. Read more [here](#).

[Spotify](#)

The simplest and most practical lesson I know ... is to resolve to be good today – but better tomorrow.

Letter to de Sales White February 28, 1841

Please forward this on

We would love to reach more people and share the mahi we are doing and connect to our wider community as well. Please feel free to share this newsletter widely, and we encourage people to subscribe. The QR code will take you to the Karanga Atawhai Subscription page.



Venerable Mary Aikenhead Oration

This year's Venerable Mary Aikenhead Oration offers a timely reflection on one of the defining questions of our age: how do we engage with rapidly developing technologies without losing sight of what it means to be human?

Titled "Optimistic or Overwhelmed? Engaging Tech in an Age of Optimisation," the 2026 Oration will be presented by Associate Professor Victoria Lorrimar, Director of the Centre for Technology and Human Futures at the University of Notre Dame Australia.

Drawing on Pope Leo XIX's encyclical "Magnifica Humanitas" this oration will explore how we might engage emerging technologies whilst promoting dignity of the human person and flourishing for all.

It is on July 23 2026 with RSVP by 22 July 2026.

You can find out more information [here](#).



We want to hear from you...

Share your stories with us

We hope Karanga Atawhai can be a place where our ministries are connected, and where the wider Mercy mahi across our whānau can be seen and shared.

If you have a story to contribute, we would love to hear from you please email: natasha@whanaumercy.nz

