

Karanga Atawahai

Mercy Yesterday, Today and in the Future

It appears there is no such thing as “too late” when it comes to Mercy mission.

The recent gathering in Sydney of the Mercy Mission Formation Network was my first immersion into the world of Mercy mission beyond Aotearoa. It was also, as it happens, the last time this particular gathering would take place. Having completed what the group was established to do, the need to meet in person in order to forge relationships and strengthen Mercy mission had become somewhat optional. Networks of Mercy mission across Australia, Aotearoa and the Pacific are now well-served with channels of communication, strong friendships and technology platforms for sharing resources. It could have been a bit awkward to be the new arrival into this group, especially when everyone else was in reflective mood and talking about wrapping things up, but it wasn't.

The theme “Mercy Yesterday, Today and into the Future” was perfect. It was great to hear common stories of the early Sisters of Mercy arriving in their classic northern hemisphere religious habit and immediately setting about their work amidst all manner of hardships. Education, healthcare, housing and attending to whatever needs were most pressing were, unsurprisingly, common themes and we were able to contribute something of our own Mercy forebears, who were every bit as intelligent, committed and courageous as any who made landfall in Australia.

Aotearoa may be small in comparison with Australia, but our Mercy traditions run deep and much of our mission works were established decades ahead of parts of Australia. The story of Mother Cecilia Maher and her band of Sisters who, in 1850, responded to Pompallier's call, at



Image: Jess Doherty

the request of Maori women, for ‘wahine tapu’ to come and educate Maori, is familiar and Pompallier's championing of religious freedom as part of Te Tiriti in 1840 no doubt swept a path for those first Sisters of Mercy.

The first Mercy footsteps in Aotearoa may have been taken in Auckland, but further south the courage it took to establish mission works on the West Coast and beyond, helped in no small way through guidance from the Mercy mission in Singleton, Australia, was hugely influential. One curious footnote to emerge from this gathering, was recognition that our town of Gore had a leading part to play in founding a Mercy mission in Mansfield, near Melbourne.

From those times to these, where Mercy mission is thriving as laity-led works alongside Mercy congregational endeavours, there exists a well-worn journey of encounter and as with every Australia-Aotearoa-Pacific gathering, we discovered much in common alongside that which sets us apart.

As a nod to Catherine McAuley and a cheerful symbol of unity, everyone received a yellow rose lapel pin at the final liturgy – a lovely point of departure, especially for those who had just arrived.

Suzanne O'Rouke
Kaihapai | Projects Lead

WMM Identity Statement approved by the Trustees

The Trustees recently approved the Whānau Mercy Ministries Identity Statement. The statement articulates who we are, why we exist, and what guides our shared mission. We encourage everyone across our ministries to read it and use it as a resource for formation and reflection, helping us to deepen our understanding of our Mercy identity and purpose. The statement can be downloaded below and reads:

At its heart, the identity of Whānau Mercy Ministries flows from the understanding that our ministries exist to make visible the mercy of God in today's world, especially among those most in need.

Whānau Mercy Ministries is a Ministerial Public Juridic Person in Aotearoa New Zealand, formally entrusted by the Catholic Church to carry forward the mission of Jesus Christ through the Mercy tradition founded by Catherine McAuley. The Mercy tradition is expressed as a 'charism' - a way of being Catholic, a gift to the Church and the community.

As a lay-led entity operating under both canon law and civil law, Whānau Mercy Ministries Trustees and directors exercise responsible autonomy for the particular ministries entrusted to us. The heart of Whānau Mercy Ministries is found in the living out of this identity, in ways that remain faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Our identity shapes what we do, why we do it, and how we do it. This is given expression through the work of our ministries in responding to the Gospel call to love and serve the poor and vulnerable, to seek justice, and to uphold the dignity of every person. Inspired by the Holy Spirit to live out the Mercy charism, the Mercy whānau responds to the cry of the poor and the cry of Earth with compassion, courage and practical action, contributing to the flourishing of individuals, communities, and the whole of creation.

Our ministries are governed by the values of aroha (love in action), whanaungatanga (right relationship and community), and kaitiakitanga (faithful care of people and resources). These values shape our relationships, our decision-making, and our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, acting as faithful stewards within the whole community of creation.

Gerald Scanlan

Those entrusted with governance share responsibility for the faithful, sustainable and accountable stewardship of the identity. We seek to be attentive to the signs of the times and to pursue the common good, leading with wisdom, humility and a generous heart for Mercy.

All who serve within Whānau Mercy Ministries, whatever their personal faith identity or commitment, are expected to align with our values and respect and contribute to our mission with works of mercy, responding to what God's mercy is doing in the world. This is fostered by active participation in ongoing formation appropriate to their role. In this way, we nurture identity as a culture of welcome, respect and shared purpose, grounded in the expression of the Mercy charism.

June 16 2026

[Download Statement](#)

AMPJP Synodality in Practice webinar

Tuesday 7 July 2026 9.00pm - 10.00pm NZT

REGISTRATION

Caroline Thompson brings her extensive wisdom and experience to this space.

The call to synodality is a challenge to all levels of Catholic governance. How can your board, team or staff group ensure that the essence of synodality – inclusion, openness to all viewpoints and deep listening – are realised? What are some synodal structures and approaches which work well? Caroline will guide attendees in this conversation.

WMM Welcomes Alofa Lale to the team

We are delighted to welcome Alofa Lale to Whānau Mercy Ministries as our new Mercy Outreach Coordinator.



Alofa joins us from Mercy Hospital, where she served as Mission Co-ordinator for almost 10 years, supporting mission initiatives and helping to bring Mercy values to life through her work and relationships. Her experience, commitment to the Mercy charism, and passion for people will be a wonderful asset to our ministries.

We are excited to have Alofa join the Whānau Mercy Ministries team and look forward to the gifts, energy, and insight she will bring to this role. Please join us in extending a warm welcome to Alofa as she begins this new chapter with us.

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.



IS THIS A FAIR SHARE?



PAY GAPS STAY HIDDEN WHEN NO ONE HAS TO REPORT THEM.

The Gender Pay Gap in New Zealand is 5.2%. Tell the Government it's time to implement pay gap reporting in Aotearoa New Zealand now. Still Minding the Gap have launched a campaign to do just that. Just add your biscuit to the online tin on their website to make your voice heard.

Add your biscuit to back a fair share at stillmindingthegap.nz

Catherine McAuley Symposium

We are delighted to see registrations coming in for the Catherine McAuley Symposium. You can find out more about the programme, speakers and registration here. A limited number of discounted rooms have been secured at nearby accommodation and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis, so early registration is encouraged.

The Symposium will explore what it means to be a religious organisation in a changing global environment, with a particular focus on the significance and contribution of First Nations perspectives within religious organisations. We warmly encourage you to consider sharing your experience, research or practice.

Paper proposals are still being accepted, and we are keen to receive submissions from across a wide range of disciplines, ministries and lived experiences, both within and beyond Mercy. Whether you have undertaken formal research, developed an innovative practice, or have insights to contribute, we invite you to submit a proposal for either a paper, workshop or student presentation. Proposals are reviewed at the end of each month and can be submitted here.



REGISTRATION FORM

SUBMIT PAPER

Governance Essentials

July 21 2026 7:00pm to 9:00 pm

New to board roles? Or looking to refresh and update your governance knowledge?

Join Jo Cribb CFinD for an interactive, practical webinar covering the essentials of governance: how governance differs from other leadership roles, your legal duties, what good governance looks like and how to add the most value to your board.

Jo has built a distinguished career tackling major social issues in New Zealand, including child poverty, violence against women, and unemployment. She has held senior leadership roles in the public sector, led key organisations, and brings extensive governance experience across a range of sectors.



Strategy September

Strengthening strategic thinking is an important part of leading our ministries well.

We are pleased to offer a Strategic Essentials Webinar with Jo Cribb on Thursday 3 September, from 7.00–9.00 pm, followed by a Strategy Masterclass on Thursday 10 September and Thursday 17 September, from 7.00–9.30 pm each evening. The cost of both opportunities will be fully covered by Whānau Mercy Ministries.

Further information, including registration details, will be shared in the next edition of Karanga Atawhai and will also be available on the Whānau Mercy Ministries website.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Mercy Way of Discernment

A new discernment process for our Mercy Ministries has been approved by the Whānau Mercy Ministries Trustees. *Te Ara Whakatau Atawhai* provides a shared framework for faithful discernment across our ministries. You can find out more and download the document below.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Mercy International Logo

The logo developed for the 200th Anniversary of the first House of Mercy is available for use. We encourage our ministries to use it. You can find out more here:

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



200th
ANNIVERSARY
OF THE FOUNDING OF
Catherine McAuley's
FIRST HOUSE OF MERCY

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.



Mercy Alliance webinar

Mercy Alliance work collaboratively to offer formation opportunities. These opportunities 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. The next one is:

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](#)

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

