

Karanga Atawhai

Karanga Atawhai - The Voice of Whānau Mercy Ministries

July 2026

First Nations Mercy Circle gathered in Auckland

The First Nations Mercy Circle gathered in Auckland in July, bringing together the members of our new group kanohi ki te kanohi for the second time since we began in April to continue shaping a shared vision for First Nations leadership, wisdom and influence across Mercy.

Our gathering began with a heartfelt Mihi Whakatau led by Bill Takerei and hosted by Te Waipuna Puawai. From the moment we arrived, we experienced a deep sense of manaakitanga. Every detail reflected the generosity, hospitality and care of our hosts, creating a space where relationships could deepen and important kōrero could unfold.

A particularly special gift was the presence of the Sisters of Mercy, who joined us for the mihi whakatau. Sr Patricia Rowe shared the story of the Sisters' ministry in Auckland, the history of Te Waipuna Puawai, and the long-standing relationships that continue to shape Mercy in Aotearoa. Their presence and blessing gave the gathering a strong sense of continuity with the Mercy story and affirmed the significance of the journey the Circle has begun. The gift of their presence remained with us throughout the two days, grounding our conversations in the traditions, faith and relationships that have brought us to this point.

One of the significant milestones of the gathering was confirming the name of the group as the *First Nations Mercy Circle*. Together, we also refined our emerging purpose and confirmed the six values that will guide our work: Love, Justice, Truth, Cultural Integrity, Cultural Humility and Deep Listening. These foundations will continue to shape the Circle as it grows and seeks to strengthen First Nations leadership, governance and formation across Mercy.

While much of our time was spent in heart-filling discussion, there was also space to deepen our connection



Image: Jess Davis

with the whenua and from one another. Sophie and Frances led us on a beautiful rongoā walk, generously sharing traditional knowledge of native plants and their healing properties. It was a reminder that wisdom is found not only around the meeting table but also in the whenua itself.

Of course, no Mercy gathering would be complete without sharing food together. Te Waipuna Puawai cared for us abundantly throughout our time together. From a boil-up and freshly made fry bread to a delicious hāngī and steamed pudding, every meal became another opportunity to share stories and strengthen relationships.

As the Circle continues to grow, so too does our shared commitment to ensuring First Nations wisdom, leadership and voices are recognised as an integral part of Mercy's future. We left Auckland encouraged, energised and grateful—for the relationships that have been strengthened, the foundations that have been laid, and the journey that lies ahead.



90 years of Mercy Hospital in Dunedin

July 16th 2026, marked 90 years since Mercy Hospital was established, firstly at Royal Terrace and then moving to the current site at Newington Avenue in Māori Hill.

The opportunity to celebrate this milestone of 90 years, with past and present staff, Mercy whānau, Board members, Sisters of Mercy and the wider community was enjoyed by all.

The celebrations on that day began at 7.00am that morning with the blessing and unveiling of our Pou Manawa named 'Kaitaka'. Kaitaka was commissioned by the Māori and Pacific Kaihautū/Leadership Team to be a symbol signifying Mercy Hospital's commitment to Te Tiriti and te Ao Māori. The designer is Morgan Darlinson from Kai Tahu, Tainui, Ngati Porou, and based in Otautahi/Christchurch. A brief description of the idea around Kaitaka: Kaitaka is representative of and depicting the Sisters of Mercy using shawls to wrap infants in their work. The korowai/cloak design represents the feminine essence of Mercy Hospital and the connection to manaaki and care for people. It also represents ahikaarua - settlement of people and place, and the long-burning fires of both settlement of local rūnaka and also Mercy Hospital foundations. The cut patterns and designs of the tāniko (border) - the kōwhaiwhai - depict people and movement, and our evolution.

Other activities during the day included Birthday cake, a Mercy quiz, unveiling the 90th year plaque on the walkway, Long Service Awards and a social event in the evening. All in all, a great way to celebrate, reflect and look toward the future and what that might hold.

Alofa Lale



Catherine McAuley Symposium

[MORE INFORMATION](#)

[REGISTRATION FORM](#)



Atawhaingia ō tātau kāinga

13 – 15 December 2026

Latest Mercy Echoes Podcast

The latest episode from the Mercy International Association is out now with an interview with Sister Libby Fernandez rsm, founder of Mercy Pedalers

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

[LISTEN HERE](#)

What does it mean to be a religious organisation in a changing world? How do we remain faithful to our charism while responding to new cultural, social and global realities? These are some of the questions that will shape the Catherine McAuley Symposium, taking place in Wellington from 13–15 December 2026.

Bringing together participants from across Aotearoa New Zealand and beyond, the Symposium will provide an opportunity to explore the future of mission, leadership and governance through the lens of faith.

There is still time to contribute. We warmly invite paper and workshop proposals from those working, researching or reflecting in this space, within and beyond Mercy. 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 Symposium Committee reviews paper and workshop submissions at the end of each month, so if you have an idea to share, we'd love to hear from you.

WMM trustees approve Care for our Common Home Goals

Caring for creation is not an optional extra for Mercy, it is central to who we are and how we live our mission.

At their recent meeting, the Whānau Mercy Ministries Trustees approved seven Care for Our Common Home Goals, marking an important milestone in our commitment to integral ecology. These goals will guide our work across governance, leadership, formation and ministry, providing a shared framework for how we respond to the call of Laudato Si' in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand.

The goals reflect our commitment to:

- Responding to the cry of Earth
- Responding to the cry of the poor
- Ecological economics
- The adoption of sustainable lifestyles
- Ecological education
- Ecological spirituality
- Community resilience and empowerment

"Hope would have us recognize that there is always a way out, that we can always redirect our steps." Pope Francis, Laudato Si'



Hīkoi Atawhai ki Aotearoa

Walking Our Mercy Story Together

Planning is well underway for the Whānau Mercy Ministries Hīkoi Atawhai ki Aotearoa, taking place from 28–31 October 2026. Beginning at Waitangi and journeying to Pāwārenga in the North Hokianga, participants will travel through places that hold deep significance in the story of Catholicism and Mercy in Aotearoa. This offers an opportunity to encounter the rich history, faith and relationships that continue to shape our Mercy mission today.

Together, participants will explore our Mercy beginnings on this whenua, deepen their understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the Catholic story in Aotearoa, and reflect on what these foundations mean for our mission today.

Each Whānau Mercy Ministries ministry will be invited to nominate two participants, one from governance and one from operations to share in this experience together. An information and registration email, including programme details, costs and nomination information, will be sent to ministries within the next two weeks. We encourage organisations to begin considering who might participate in this unique opportunity for formation, connection and shared pilgrimage.



Heritage Webinar Series

The Path to the First House of Mercy 1827



A new Heritage Webinar Series from Mercy International Association was 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 were led by Head of Heritage and Spirituality Caroline Thompson. In case you missed the first three, the recordings can be found [here](#).

The link to register for the fourth one that is on August 12 (11:30 pm NZ) can be found [here](#).

Spiritual reflection

Caroline Thompson has also written a spiritual reflection on Catherine McAuley as relational leader. It talks about the relational nature of Catherine and her ability to connect others with her mission, what we may call whanaungatanga. That can be found [here](#).

Strategic Essentials



September 3 2026 7:00pm to 9:00 pm

Join Jo Cribb for the Strategy Essentials for Good Governance webinar where she will share practical tools to ensure your board develops and implements impactful strategy.

Jo has built a distinguished career tackling major social issues in New Zealand, including child poverty, violence against women, and unemployment. She is a strong advocate for effective, diverse governance, seeing it as essential to strengthening organisations and creating meaningful impact for communities. This webinar is offered free of charge with costs covered by Whānau Mercy Ministries. This workshop will be worth 2 CPD. To support shared learning across Whānau Mercy Ministries, we encourage every Board to be represented, with at least one director from each ministry to attend this webinar. Details about how to register for the masterclass will be released shortly.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Mercy Alliance webinar

Mercy Alliance work collaboratively to offer formation opportunities during the year to help 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:

Tools for ethical decision-making 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](#)

Save the date if you are in Auckland

On the 24th November in the afternoon, we are able to offer an in person session available with Susan Pascoe AM up in Auckland for those involved with our ministries with a brief look at the context of synodality, but to focus more practically on the process of discernment.

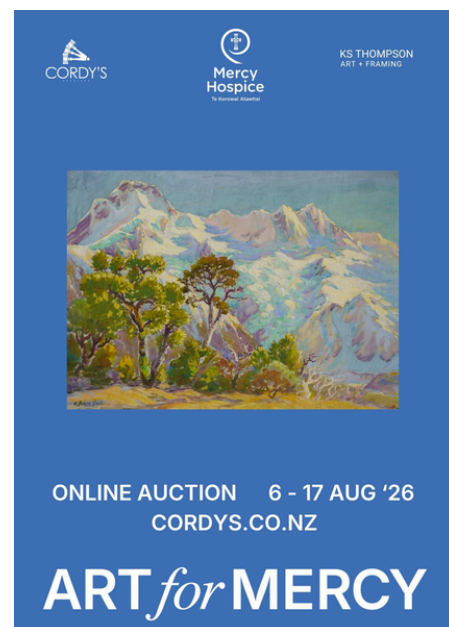
It will look when discernment is appropriate, and at practical tips for dealing with difficult situations in the process of discernment.

Designed for those involved in governance and leadership, the session aims to build confidence in using discernment as a practical tool that brings together faith, Mercy values, wisdom and good governance in everyday decision-making. Susan is an expert in this space and was one of the table facilitators for the Synod on Synodality.

The recent approval of Te Ara Whakatau Atawhai marks an important step in strengthening mission-centred decision-making across our ministries. As we begin embedding the process of discernment into practice, this session provides an opportunity to deepen our understanding of discernment and build confidence in using it in governance and leadership.

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.



Art for Mercy is an online auction featuring 100 original artworks generously donated from the personal collection of renowned arts educator and collector Michèle Whitecliffe. With many works starting at under \$100, it's a wonderful opportunity to find an original piece while supporting Mercy Hospice's free specialist end-of-life care. The auction runs 6–17 August. Click the image above from the 5th August when the auction goes live and place your bid.

