

Karanga Atawhai

Karanga Atawhai - The Voice of Whānau Mercy Ministries

September 2026

Open Doors of Mercy

At the recent St Mary's College Wellington Mercy Day Mass, Fr Patrick Bridgeman offered the students some thoughts that have stayed with me.

He told them that the Sisters of Mercy were praying for them. When they feel alone, he told them, they should remember that there are women of Mercy praying for them.

There was something powerful in that reminder, we belong to a story, a community and a tradition of people who have prayed, served and loved and who continue to accompany and share their wisdom with us. What a gift we have been given.

But Fr Patrick then turned to another image: the doors of Mercy. He told the students that they were doors of Mercy in the world, colourful doors of Mercy.

He spoke of the needs we see around us still, across the world and here in Aotearoa, and invited the students to consider how they might respond to those needs. How might they, with the gifts they have been given, show up in the world as open doors of Mercy?

It struck me as an invitation not only for the students, but for all of us who are part of the Mercy whānau.

Fr Patrick also wanted the students to remember an address: 64A Baggot Street, Dublin. If they ever find themselves in Dublin, he told them, they can put tell the uber driver that address and go there. It is a real place, a place that is part of their Mercy story.

In 1827, Catherine McAuley opened the doors of the House of Mercy on Baggot Street. Those doors opened onto a very real world of poverty, vulnerability and need. What Catherine had, her faith, her resources, her relationships, her courage and her particular gifts, became a means through which others could encounter Mercy.

As we begin the countdown towards the 200th anniversary of those doors first opening, the invitation is not only to look back and celebrate what began there, but also to ask what it means to



Image: Jess Dain splash

open the doors of Mercy now.

Because the doors of Mercy are no longer only on Baggot Street. We are all those doors. Our world is not short of places where Mercy is needed. There are people who are struggling, people who feel unseen or unheard, and places where dignity, compassion and hope are desperately needed.

We cannot respond to every need. But each of us has been given gifts by God, and each of us encounters people and situations that others may never encounter. Through the way we love, listen, welcome, advocate, lead, teach, care and serve, we can create openings through which Mercy enters the world.

Catherine could not have known what would flow through the doors she opened on Baggot Street almost two centuries ago. As Fr Patrick mentioned she could scarcely have imagined St Mary's College Wellington on the other side of the world. She simply responded, with what she had, to the needs she saw before her.

That is our invitation too. To notice what is before us, to recognise what God has placed within each of us, and then to ask how those gifts might become Mercy for someone else.

May each of us show up in our world as an open door of Mercy.

Mercy Day in Dunedin

The Mercy Outreach Partners in Dunedin gathered to celebrate the Mercy Day. It was an occasion of building relationships, making connections, and sharing kai together.

Catherine McAuley encouraged the ministry of lay people. Our Outreach Partners are the hands and feet of our Mercy charism. They serve in many areas within our communities. They are doing what Catherine McAuley, and the Sisters of Mercy would be doing if they were here today.

Representatives were present from Age Concern Otago, Catholic Social Services, Dunedin Night Shelter, Middle Eastern Integration Unit, Moana House, Otago Community Hospice, Otago Corrections Facility, Otago Polytechnic, Rock Solid, Servants Health Centre, and the Wellness Gym.

Happy Mercy Day everyone from us all in Dunedin.

Alofa Lale



Social Justice Initiative

Whnau Mercy Ministries is extending Kākano Atawhai, our initiative connecting young people as they leave school with the wider Mercy community. Kākano means seed and atawhai translates as showing kindness and care.

This year an invitation was sent to all colleges with a connection to Mercy across Aotearoa, inviting their Year 13 students to take part.

Every Year 13 student at participating schools will receive a small packet of kōwhai seeds, hand packed (see the supplies that have arrived below), a symbol of strength, resilience and new beginnings. As they prepare to leave school, and begin a new chapter, they are invited to become part of a growing community connected by a shared commitment to Social Justice and making a difference in their communities.



Early bird price extended



Atawhaingia ō tātau kāinga

13 – 15 December 2026

The early bird price for the Catherine McCuley Symposium in Wellington has been extended until October 20th. After that date, the price will become \$325. There are an exciting array of speakers coming from the USA, UK, Australia and Aotearoa.

[MORE INFORMATION](#)

[REGISTRATION FORM](#)

Congratulations to Mercy Hospital

Mercy Hospital has received national recognition, taking home two awards at the New Zealand Private Surgical Hospitals Association (NZPSHA) Awards Gala Dinner in Auckland.

Mercy was named the winner of the Employer of Choice Award, with its winning entry also receiving the People's Choice Award on the night.

The Employer of Choice Award recognises excellence in staff engagement, wellbeing, professional development, and creating a workplace culture where people can thrive.

Mercy received the award for its Leadership in Action programme, which reflects the hospital's commitment to developing capable, values-led leaders and fostering a positive workplace culture.

Congratulations to the Mercy Hospital team on this wonderful recognition of their investment in people, leadership and workplace culture.

From Aotearoa to Ireland – Completing My MELF Journey

In August, I had the privilege of travelling to Ireland for the final gathering of the Mercy Emerging Leaders Fellowship (MELF) – Cohort 5, bringing to a close an incredible journey of learning, leadership, reflection and connection.

Ireland was particularly special because it gave us the opportunity to reconnect as a cohort and reflect on how much we had grown since beginning MELF. Throughout the fellowship, our journey had taken us from our immersion experience in Cambodia, New York, and finally to Ireland, where we shared the culmination of our individual justice projects and celebrated our graduation.

For my final presentation, I shared Te Ara Ōhanga – A Pathway to Economic Wellbeing, the framework that grew from my MELF justice project exploring economic displacement in vulnerable communities and from the experiences of the wāhine and whānau we walk alongside at Te Waipuna Puawai.

Standing in Ireland and sharing Te Ara Ōhanga with our international Mercy whānau was a proud moment. What began with questions about financial hardship and economic displacement had grown into a culturally grounded framework centred on mana, dignity, identity, relationships, practical capability and whānau flourishing.

One of the strongest lessons I have taken from MELF is that leadership is not simply about being at the front. It is about having the courage to listen, to remain open to learning, and to walk alongside others in ways that uphold their dignity and recognise the strengths they already carry.

Completing MELF has also reminded me of the strength of our global Mercy whānau. The relationships formed across countries, cultures and ministries have been one of the greatest gifts of this experience. Although our communities and contexts may look different, we share a commitment to Mercy, justice and responding to the needs we see around us.

I return home to Aotearoa incredibly grateful – to Whānau Mercy Ministries, to my Te Waipuna Puawai whānau, to my mentors and family, and especially to the wāhine and whānau whose experiences helped shape my justice project.

MELF may have officially finished, but I see this less as an ending and more as the beginning of the next chapter.

Te Ara Ōhanga has come home with me, and now the work continues.

Ngā mihi nui,
Josie Ruawhare
MELF Cohort 5 | Te Waipuna Puawai



Good ecclesiology for good governance with Fr Gerard Aynsley



October 15 2026 7:00pm to 8:00 pm

Whānau Mercy Ministries welcomes back Fr Gerard Aynsley for an online conversation exploring Good Ecclesiology for Good Governance.

Those who serve in the governance and leadership of our ministries bring professional expertise, generous service and a deep commitment to mission. This session invites us to step back and consider the bigger picture, how our ministries belong within the wider life and mission of the Church, and what that means for the way we lead, govern and make decisions.

Gerard will explore some key understandings of what it means to be Church and how these can inform the governance and management of our ministries.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Discernment in Practice workshop with Susan Pascoe

On 24 November, Whānau Mercy Ministries is delighted to welcome Susan Pascoe AM to Auckland for an in-person workshop exploring discernment in practice and its place in Mercy governance and leadership.

Susan brings extensive experience in this area, including as a member of the Vatican's Methodology Commission for the Synod on Synodality and as a facilitator at the Synod Assemblies in Rome in 2023 and 2024.

The practical session will explore when discernment is appropriate, how we create the conditions for genuine listening, and how we navigate some of the difficult situations that can arise during a discernment process. It will also make connections with Te Ara Whakatau Atawhai, WMM's own discernment process. The workshop will be held from 2.00–4.00pm at St Mary's Convent, Auckland, with an online option available for those outside Auckland. The session is open to people from across our ministries and is offered at no cost.

[REGISTRATION](#)

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 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](#)

THE CHANGING FACE OF CATHOLICISM WEBINAR

Council of Australasian Catholics (CAC)

(Formerly Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform)

and Garratt Publishing present

THE CHANGING FACE OF CATHOLICISM

Webinar

This webinar on 8th October at 9pm is bringing together representatives from a diverse range of Catholic communities and organisations across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

The panel will explore the many ways lay Catholics are gathering and participating in the life of the Church today, through social justice, education, spirituality, dialogue, community and ministry. Among the speakers is Margaret Bounader, representing the AMPJP, alongside representatives from Catalyst for Renewal, Rongopai Eucharistic Community, St Lucia Spirituality, Teams of Our Lady and the St Vincent de Paul Society.

[REGISTRATION](#)

