

# Karanga Atawhai

The voice of Whānau Mercy Ministries OCTOBER 2024



## Palliative Care in Aotearoa

Caring for the sick and dying was a central feature of Catherine's ministry from the outset. Catherine learnt many skills whilst caring for Mr Callighan who was an apothecarist. One of the purposes of the house on Baggot Street, the opening of which we celebrate on Mercy Day was to care for the poor. The Sisters of Mercy became known as the 'walking sisters' because they went to the homes of the sick and dying to provide solace and comfort, even during the cholera epidemic when providing such services came at great personal risk.

Our modern-day hospice services follow in this tradition of caring for those at the end of their lives. In western medical tradition, palliative care

has become a recognised sub-speciality. Even so, the family home with the support of Hospice assisting whānau and friends is the first choice for many who are terminally ill.

In the face of these advances, Māori and Pasifika communities in Aotearoa have actively sought to retain and restore cultural practices and traditions of caring for the sick, dying and tupapaku. Recently Mercy Hospice hosted Mauri mate, an experiential exhibit to showcase the Māori palliative care framework developed by the broader hospice sector.

*You can click or scan the QR code to view the exhibition featured on Te Ao Māori News.*



## First Mercy Day as Ko te Hapai O: A reflection

**Dave Mullin, Ko te Hapai O, Whānau Mercy Ministries**

During the week surrounding 24 September this year, I had the privilege of experiencing my first Mercy Day celebrations as Ko te Hapai O/Executive Director. Mercy Day and the events that surround it hold a deep significance across our Mercy whānau, commemorating the founding of the first House of Mercy by Catherine McAuley on Baggot Street, Dublin.

As I stood among our whānau at different events and saw posts and videos on social media of people praying, remembering, celebrating, and looking forward – I couldn't help but feel connected to the rich legacy of service and compassion that Catherine envisioned and, with her companions, implemented nearly two centuries ago.

The celebrations of Mercy Day are a powerful reminder of the values that guide our mission:

*Aroha, Whanaungatanga, Kaitiakitanga.* It was humbling to reflect on how Catherine's bold decision to provide a place of refuge and education for women and children in 1827 has blossomed into a global movement – through circles of Mercy that extend all over the world. Her foresight in choosing a location where the poor would be seen by the wealthy was profound, and that courage continues to inspire our work today.

As I engaged with companions in ministry, including members of Nga Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa and our wider Mercy whānau, I was struck by the palpable sense of connection to the past and commitment to the future. It was a day of celebration, but also of recommitment.

This Mercy Day was a great personal and professional experience, grounding me in the responsibility and privilege of working within Whānau Mercy Ministries, challenging me to consider bold decisions in all areas of my life. I hope you have had similar experiences, during Mercy Day and in other ways.

St Mary's College, Auckland celebrated Mercy Day Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral. This year's theme was:

*Celebrate: Our stories, Our People, Mercy*  
*Kia Whakanui: a mātou kōrero,*  
*a mātou tāngata, Atawhai*



**Mercy Hospice**  
 Te Korowai Atawhai



"Mercy in Bloom" encapsulated the spirit of Mercy Day for Mercy Hospice this year as it reflects the growth of our organisation and the individuals within it. This theme encouraged us to acknowledge the seeds of compassion, dedication, and resilience that have taken root in our history and within ourselves, allowing us to thrive in a changing environment while staying true to our values. As we celebrated, we recognised the ongoing nature of growth and were encouraged by our collective efforts that contribute to the legacy of Mercy. Mercy Day was an opportunity for everyone to reflect on what has been achieved so far and to acknowledge our commitment to nurturing future growth.



*Villa Maria College*  
 TE WHARE O MERI  
 LEARN TO PRIZE WHAT IS OF VALUE

Villa Maria College, Christchurch celebrated Mercy Day with a beautiful Mass. We were delighted to welcome so many Ngā Whaea Atawhai / Sisters of Mercy who joined us for our Mass. We felt really blessed as we know they have many invitations to join with kura who have Mercy as their charism. When the heavens opened shortly after the end of the Mass, we were greatly relieved that we had all the Sisters indoors and sheltered. This wasn't the case for many students who were working to get the chairs moved amidst the downpour and hail! In the afternoon we held our annual Choral Fest which was a great fun celebration of House spirit.



To celebrate Mercy Day this year, TWP chose the theme: *“What are we as TWP staff grateful for?”* To help us celebrate, we invited our local Sisters of Mercy and the community around our Umere Street, Auckland complex. To convey our message, we launched a video and attendees also had the opportunity to hear firsthand, the testimonials of gratitude and thanks from our staff. This was a wonderful way of recognising the legacy left by the Sisters for us as lay people to adhere too and show our commitment to ensure we continue the amazing work of Mercy in our communities.



## Hīkoi Atawhai ki Aotearoa 2024

Our inaugural Hīkoi to Te Tai Tokerau with its many places of cultural, Mercy, and Catholic significance will take place from the 7 – 10 November 2024. On this occasion we asked each ministry to nominate staff members who identify as Tangata Whenua to participate as Pilgrims and we are delighted that 20 people have signed up.

It is our hope that the 2024 Hīkoi sets the foundation for future hīkoi and formation, grounded in the voices and experience of Tangata Whenua on hīkoi. In early 2025 we will advertise the criteria for future Hīkoi Atawhai in 2025.

## Inaugural Reports

WMM was established by decree on the 27 November 2022 and started operating on 1 April 2023 as ministries were formally transferred.

Therefore, the first consolidated financial report for the Whānau Mercy Ministries Trust Group was recently published for the year ended 31 March 2024. The trustees thank those involved in the preparation of financial reporting in all our ministries and of course recognise all the mahi that the financial accounts represent.

In addition to the financial report that is required for the group, WMM also reports to the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. The Dicastery is part of the Vatican in Rome. This report details more of what WMM and the ministries do and highlights that WMM conforms with the intention of its foundation as established in 2022. Once this report is finalised it is presented to the dicastery. A copy is provided to the Sponsor's Council for WMM, appointed by the founding congregation Ngā Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa Sisters of Mercy New Zealand. A version of this report will be sent to ministries in December and published on the website of Whānau Mercy Ministries when the website is completed.

## We are Hiring

Looking for a fresh challenge in a diverse ministry context? WMM is looking to fill two brand new roles.

- **Formation and Development Lead**
- **Advisor – Operations/Projects**

For more information, visit [www.whanaumercy.nz](http://www.whanaumercy.nz)

## Upcoming important dates

**11 November – Anniversary of Catherine McAuley's death**

**27 November – WMM Establishment**

WMM was established by decree on the 27 November 2022. This decree, from the Vatican's Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life set in motion all the formal steps required for the congregation to begin transferring ministries to WMM and of course for the Trustees to begin their work.

**12 December – Foundation Day**

On 12 December 1831, Catherine McAuley and two others professed their vows and became known as the Sisters of Mercy. On 12 December 2005 the four Congregations of Aotearoa united to become a single Congregation – Nga Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa Sisters of Mercy New Zealand.

**The new WMM website is under construction: [www.whanaumercy.nz](http://www.whanaumercy.nz)**



In the next few weeks we will be seeking content from ministries and getting ready for launch. In 2025 the website will include a Formation Resources Hub and a place to find out about all the wonderful mahi that occurs.



*Stay in touch:* Join the Whānau Mercy Ministries mailing list by emailing [office@whanaumercy.nz](mailto:office@whanaumercy.nz)



**Te Ngākau Atawhai – Heart of Mercy:** In Aotearoa, the Mercy Cross, central to Catherine McAuley's spirituality, is supported by a pair of koru. The koru represent the unfolding of new life and link our Mercy story to the spirituality of Māori and the ancient lore of this land.

*Karanga Atawhai is the newsletter of Whānau Mercy Ministries, a Ministerial Public Juridic Person (MPJP) under Canon Law.*

**Postal Address:** PO Box 12135, Thorndon, Wellington 6144.