



MARY AIKENHEAD MINISTRIES

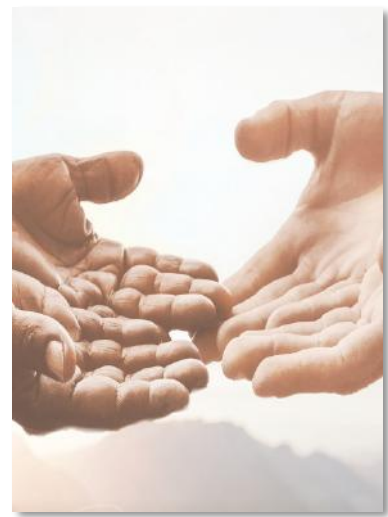
JOURNEYS

VOLUME 23 | ISSUE 2 | JUNE 2026



JUSTICE

WELCOME TO JOURNEYS



Welcome to the June edition of *Journeys*.

This quarter, we reflect on the value of **Justice**, a value deeply embedded in the charism of Mary Aikenhead and the mission entrusted to us today. Justice is more than fairness or compliance; it is the recognition of the inherent dignity of every person and a commitment to ensuring that dignity is upheld in our decisions, relationships and actions.

Throughout this edition, we encounter inspiring examples of justice lived in practice. We see it in advocacy for those experiencing homelessness, in the compassionate care offered through our education, health and aged care ministries, in opportunities for formation and pilgrimage that deepen our understanding of mission, and in the countless ways our people accompany others with respect, courage and hope. These stories remind us that justice is not an abstract ideal but a daily expression of our shared mission.

As we look ahead, we are reminded that justice calls each of us to remain attentive to those who may be overlooked, excluded or left behind. In a rapidly changing world, our mission continues to challenge us to place the human person at the centre of all we do, guided by compassion, stewardship and the Gospel.

Thank you to all who contribute to the mission of Mary Aikenhead Ministries across our ministries and communities.

As you read this edition, may you be inspired by the many ways justice is lived across our ministries. Together, may we continue to uphold the dignity of every person and carry forward the mission of Mary Aikenhead with courage, compassion and hope.

UPCOMING DATES FOR THE TRUSTEES

15 June	Trustee Formation Session One Mission, Many Ministries: A Shared Table Gathering QLD
23 July	Venerable Mary Aikenhead Oration 2026
17 August	One Mission, Many Ministries: A Shared Table Gathering VIC Trustee Formation Session

For other dates, refer to the Calendar (p.22)

JUSTICE

MS PENELOPE WRIGHT

TRUSTEE



ACTING JUSTLY: A REFLECTION ON JUSTICE, DIGNITY, AND OUR MISSION

Pope Leo, in his address in St Peter's Square on 20 September 2025 celebrating the Jubilee of Justice, proclaimed that *'justice encompasses the dignity of the individual, his or her relationships with others, and the communal dimension of coexistence, with its structures and shared rules. It establishes a circularity of social relations, which places the value of every human being at its core and seeks to preserve that value through justice, especially in the face of conflicts that may arise from individual actions or from a loss of communal awareness that affects institutions and structures.'*

We speak of whether someone acts justly.

"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." — Micah 6:8

To act justly is not merely to follow rules or enforce order. It is to work toward a world that protects the weak, frees the oppressed, and refuses to leave anyone excluded or forgotten. It is our living commitment and one that the first five Sisters, and all the Sisters of Charity that followed, embodied

when they chose to stand with the poor, the sick, and the marginalised at a time when their suffering was considered just punishment, or unremarkable, and their dignity disregarded.

Pope Leo calls the justice of the Gospels *evangelical justice*. It is a justice that challenges and refines our human justice.

The Parable of the Persistent Widow (Lk 18:1–8) reminds us that steadfast hope in the face of injustice is never wasted as it is seen, and it will be answered. The higher justice of Matthew 20:1–16 reveals that justice is never merely transactional; it reaches toward mercy, toward promises kept, toward the truth that every person is worth the full wage of dignity. The Parable of the Lost Son shows us that love, grace, and forgiveness have the power to restore a person to the fullness of life, rather than leaving them wounded, diminished, or discarded. And the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Mt 18:21–35) calls us to offer the same limitless forgiveness to others that we ourselves have received.

These parables are challenging. They ask more of us than the world typically demands. They ask us to see justice not as victory, but as restoration.

"May we always try to act with justice and truth"

VENERABLE MARY AIKENHEAD

As Martin Luther King wrote in his *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*:

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

Pope Francis deepens this truth in *Laudato si'*, where justice is understood as profoundly interconnected between people, the environment, and time itself. The world we inhabit must be just in how it distributes and uses its resources, not only for those living now but to ensure the flourishing of people and planet for generations to come.

In *Dilexit Nos*, we are called to build a society of love and justice where care for the poor, the vulnerable, and our ecology are not separate concerns but inseparable expressions of Christ's love for all of humanity.

And in *Magnifica Humanitas*, Pope Leo XIV writes with great clarity: *'Each generation inherits the task of shaping its own era, of guiding history to become a place where the dignity of every person is safeguarded, justice is promoted and fraternity is made possible.'*

We live in a time when justice is inextricably bound up with the exercise of power and too often, power corrupts justice's purpose.

Justice is frequently reduced to something punitive or political: a *winner-takes-all* pursuit, where dominating or even eradicating the opposition is mistaken for righteousness. Movements arise that seek only to swap the places of the oppressed and the oppressor and in doing so, they fail to account for our shared humanity, our interconnectedness, or the humbling reality that but for circumstance, each of us could be the poor, the vulnerable, or the forgotten.

In every era of change, whether driven by conflict, by technology, or by new systems

reshaping what we have long tried to do there will be a vision of what the new *good* should be. These are precisely the moments when we must be most alert and most attentive to those who could be left behind.

Venerable Mary Aikenhead did not wait for society to deem the poor worthy of care. She acted. She went to the margins to find the sick in their homes, to create hospitals for the dying and schools for those who would otherwise not receive an education. She met the people there, not as problems to be solved, but as people worthy of care, respect and everything the rich could command through money. That spirit is our inheritance and our mission.

Our mission is rooted in a particular and non-negotiable understanding of human dignity as something every person possesses not because of status, talent, or achievement, but simply because they are human. Dignity is not evidenced by social position or ease of living. When we work to create physical conditions that are considered dignified we are giving outward expression to an inward truth: that this person matters just like each of us, inherently and unconditionally.

This is something each of you enacts every day in all your work throughout Mary Aikenhead Ministries. It is found in the moment you pause to help a student or a parent, a patient or a colleague, to give the person before you your full attention and respect.

We can also see this commitment working at a larger scale. St Vincent's Health Australia has taken a bold and groundbreaking step by appointing Erin Longbottom as National Director of Homelessness, a role with the scope and mandate to shift how this nation sees and responds to one of its most persistent injustices.

Homelessness is too easily dismissed as a local problem, or worse, as a personal failing. But what if we dared to look beyond the local and see every homeless person first as a *person*, deserving of the full weight of care, support, and accompaniment needed to find their way home? And what if, by lifting our gaze to the systemic, we could hold accountable the economic forces and policy decisions that create winners and losers leaving the poor, the voiceless, and the vulnerable to absorb the cost?

This is the kind of courageous, prophetic justice that the legacy of the Sisters of Charity demands of all of us in Mary Aikenhead Ministries.

The many dimensions of what it means to act justly can perhaps be gathered into a single, ancient principle found across the world's great religions and expressed by Jesus in both Matthew and Luke's Gospels:

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

In every way, this is the easiest thing to say and the hardest thing to do.

It asks us to see ourselves in the face of the other. It asks us to extend to the stranger, the annoying, the outcast, the inconvenient, the overlooked, the same care we would want shown to us at all times. It asks us to act with kindness, not only when it is easy or celebrated, but because it is right.

Venerable Mary Aikenhead and the Sisters of Charity lived this and they have entrusted that mission to us.



OUR VALUE: *JUSTICE*

Inspired by Jesus Christ, our ministries seek to respect the dignity of each person, acting with love. We advocate particularly for those who are vulnerable, marginalized and rendered voiceless.

Do you follow us on our Socials?



NEW!

We are now on Facebook – send us a message and follow.

Mary Aikenhead Ministries



19 YEARS OF SERVICE

MR GARY HUMPHRYS

As Mr Gary Humphrys concludes his service as Deputy Chair and Trustee of Mary Aikenhead Ministries, we express our deep gratitude for his outstanding contribution to the ministry and mission entrusted to our care.

Gary's association with the ministries of Mary Aikenhead spans more than 19 years, beginning with his appointment to the Board of St Vincent's & Holy Spirit Northside Ltd in 2007. Gary was subsequently appointed to the Board of St Vincent's Health Australia in 2010.

He joined the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries in 2017, bringing extensive executive leadership experience gained across finance, governance, technology, procurement and audit, together with service on numerous boards across the health, superannuation, energy, water and mining sectors.

During Gary's nine years as a Trustee, his wisdom, sound judgement and commitment to mission have helped guide Mary Aikenhead Ministries through a period of growth and transformation. His thoughtful leadership, strategic insight and dedication to good stewardship have strengthened the ministry while ensuring fidelity to the vision of Mary Aikenhead and the Sisters of Charity.

We thank Gary for his faithful leadership, generosity and lasting contribution to Mary Aikenhead Ministries. We wish Gary and his family every blessing as he begins this next chapter.



MAM OFFICE UPDATE

Over the first quarter, the MAM Office has welcomed back Mrs Louwana Saba, Mission & Formation Director, and Mrs Amy Pei, Senior Accountant, following their parental leave.

We are delighted to have both Louwana and Amy return to their roles and look forward to their continued contributions to the ministry.

We extend our sincere thanks to Mr Peter Ching, who stepped into the Acting Senior Accountant role during Amy's leave. Peter's professionalism and dedication ensured continuity within the Finance team, and we wish him every success in his future endeavours.

We also acknowledge Mr Troy Tornabene, who served in the Acting Mission & Formation Director position during Louwana's leave. Troy provided valued leadership and support during this period and will continue to contribute to Mary Aikenhead Ministries in his new role as Deputy Executive Officer. We congratulate Troy on his appointment and look forward to the expertise and energy he will bring to this position.



OPTIMISTIC OR OVERWHELMED? NAVIGATING TECHNOLOGY WITH WISDOM, DIGNITY AND HOPE



In every era, communities are confronted by profound social and technological change. Today, the rapid emergence of artificial intelligence and other transformative technologies is reshaping the way we live, learn, work, care, and connect. Across education, healthcare, and aged care, these developments present extraordinary opportunities, as well as complex ethical questions.

It is within this context that the 2026 Venerable Mary Aikenhead Oration will welcome Associate Professor Victoria Lorrimar as this year's Orator, presenting:

Optimistic or Overwhelmed? Engaging Tech in an Age of Optimisation

The Oration will explore how individuals and institutions might engage emerging technologies with wisdom and discernment, while respecting human dignity, and seeking compassion, justice, and flourishing of all.

Hosted by Mary Aikenhead Ministries, the annual Oration honours the enduring legacy of Venerable Mary Aikenhead, a woman whose vision of compassionate service transformed education, healthcare and social outreach in Ireland and Australia.

Today, her legacy continues through ministries committed to education, health, aged care and community service. The Oration has become an important opportunity to connect that mission heritage with the contemporary challenges facing society.

Associate Professor Victoria Lorrimar is uniquely positioned to lead this conversation.

Based at The University of Notre Dame Australia in Fremantle, she is:

- Senior Research Fellow, Institute for Ethics & Society
- Associate Dean of Research, Faculty of Education, Philosophy and Theology
- Director, Centre for Technology and Human Futures

Her work explores the ethical and human implications of emerging technologies, particularly questions surrounding artificial intelligence, identity, human flourishing, and the future of care.

For Ms Penny Wright, Trustee of Mary Aikenhead Ministries, the topic could not be more timely.

"Our world is at a pivotal moment with transformative technology seeking to reshape how people engage with learning, receive care, and experience community. While innovation brings enormous opportunity, we must also ensure that the human person remains at the centre of decision-making."

Ms Wright said the Oration reflects the continuing relevance of Venerable Mary Aikenhead's legacy in responding to contemporary challenges.

"Venerable Mary Aikenhead was a deeply faithful woman attentive to the needs of her time. The Venerable Mary Aikenhead Oration continues that tradition by creating space for

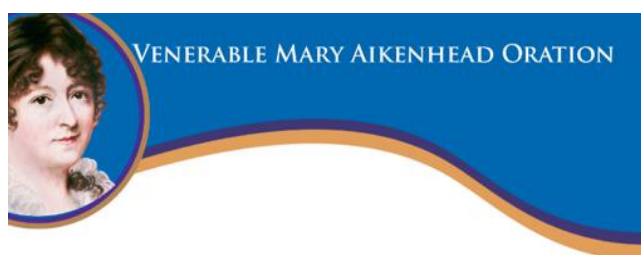
thoughtful reflection on the issues shaping our society today."

She said the event also provides an important opportunity for formation and engagement across the ministries and for all people interested in reflection on the challenges of today.

"This Oration brings together leaders from education, healthcare, aged care, governance and the wider community to engage in conversations that matter. We must have conversations about what kind of future we are creating, and how we ensure it remains grounded in care for the human person and the common good."

The 2026 Oration will be delivered in a hybrid format, allowing both in-person and online participation and extending access across ministries and communities nationally.

In a time when many people feel caught between optimism and pessimism the Venerable Mary Aikenhead Oration offers an opportunity not simply to reflect on technological change, but to consider how society might navigate it with wisdom, discernment, and hope.



OPTIMISTIC OR OVERWHELMED?

ENGAGING TECH IN AN AGE OF OPTIMISATION

A.PROF VICTORIA LORRIMAR
DIRECTOR
CENTRE FOR TECHNOLOGY AND
HUMAN FUTURES
UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

THURSDAY 23 JULY 2026

5.00PM: CANAPES & DRINKS
6.00PM - 7.30PM: ORATION INCL. Q&A

SIR PETER COSGROVE CENTRE
AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
NORTH SYDNEY

ATTEND IN PERSON OR ONLINE



Scan here to register



CANDLELIGHT VIGIL FOR BIKRAM LAMA

In a moving expression of justice, dignity and compassion, St Vincent's Health Australia's (SVHA) Homeless Health Outreach team, led by Ms Erin Longbottom, National Director of Homelessness, gathered with community members and Sydney Council on 7 May for a candlelight vigil honouring the life of Bikram Lama.

Bikram, a young Nepalese man experiencing homelessness, tragically passed away alone last year and was later found in Hyde Park, across from St Mary's Cathedral. The vigil brought together fellow rough sleepers, outreach workers, advocates and community members in a simple yet deeply powerful ceremony of remembrance.

Through tributes, songs, prayers and Buddhist blessings reflecting Bikram's cultural and faith traditions, the evening became a profound reminder that justice begins with recognising the dignity and humanity of every person.

MP Alex Greenwich acknowledged the significant gaps in support available to "non-resident homeless" people, while also recognising the vital outreach work of services such as SVHA's Homeless Health Outreach.

There was also hope amid the sorrow, with news that the Nepalese and Australian governments agreed to repatriate Bikram's remains to Nepal, allowing his family to perform his last rites.

The vigil was a powerful example of justice lived out in action - standing alongside those on the margins, honouring every human life, and advocating for a more compassionate and inclusive society.



MISSION & HERITAGE WALK

On 2 March, Ms Deirdre O'Donnell, Trustee, had the pleasure of participating in a Mission and Heritage Walk of the Fitzroy Precinct, organised as a thank you to volunteers. The walk was led by Ms Linda DeSipio, Formation & Purpose Leader VIC, together with her new Brisbane-based counterpart Kirsty, and Ms Kaylee Cassidy, SVHA National Volunteer Coordinator.

Despite Melbourne's very wet weather, the conditions added an unexpected highlight to the experience, with part of the tour taking place through underground tunnels — a first for Ms O'Donnell.

Over approximately ninety minutes, the group of around 15 volunteers, staff members and the hospital's Art Director explored some of the older parts of the precinct. Along the way, they paused to learn about significant artworks and aspects of the site's rich history and heritage.

One of the most memorable aspects of the morning for Ms O'Donnell was meeting the volunteers, who were without exception, wonderful ambassadors for St Vincent's. Many generously shared their personal reasons for volunteering and what the experience means to them.

Mission was a strong theme throughout Ms DeSipio's commentary, and the walk was appreciated by everyone who participated. It was an engaging and meaningful opportunity to reflect on the history, values and community spirit that continue to shape St Vincent's today.

ST VINCENT'S CARE CARSELDINE & VIRIDIAN

On 23 April, Mr Gary Humphrys visited St Vincent's Care Carseldine and Viridian Boondall.

At Carseldine, Mr Humphrys spent time with Ms Kylie Christianson, SVC Area Manager QLD – North; Mr Adam Gallagher, State Manager Pastoral Care QLD – North; Residential Care Facility Manager Harpreet ("Happy") Sidhu; Ms Ahslee Schaefer, Retirement Village Manager; Fr Stephen Camiolo, Facility Chaplain; and members of the Carseldine team. Ms Sidhu provided an overview of the Carseldine facility and its current operations.

One particularly impressive initiative unique to Carseldine is the introduction of a "Resident Partner" role. This position acts as a conduit between residents, families and the care team, helping strengthen communication and support. The initiative has been very positively received.

The SVC Carseldine team also shared their experience supporting SVC Kangaroo Point during the refurbishment of the St Vincent's Private Hospital Brisbane's kitchen, which services both the hospital and aged care facility. For a two-week period, Carseldine provided approximately 600 additional meals per day for Kangaroo Point residents alongside meals for their own residents. This required significant coordination and collaboration across multiple teams, with staff stepping up admirably to meet the challenge.

During the visit, Mr Humphrys toured several units, including the new SVHA Hospital in the Home (HITH) unit now based at the Carseldine site — the first such unit to be established on an aged care campus.

Ms Christianson shared plans for the redevelopment of the former Missionary Sisters unit into a specialist high-care



dementia house. The proposed model would accommodate three high-care residents within a home-like environment, including secure access to gardens and outdoor spaces.

Following Carseldine, Mr Humphrys travelled to Viridian Boondall where he was welcomed by Ms Prue Densley, National Director – Corporate Services & Consumer Experience, and Ms Kelly McMahon, National Director – Retirement Villages.

Viridian is the largest St Vincent's Care retirement village in Queensland, with 128 units. The village is trialling a new model offering four different pathways for people to access retirement living.

A particularly successful initiative has been the introduction of direct access pathways from Viridian into SVC residential aged care. This has resulted in approximately 80% of Viridian residents remaining within the SVC community when transitioning into aged care.

Viridian also offers pool therapy, a relatively unique feature, while the chapel and daily Mass continue to be highly valued by residents.



Mr Adam Gallagher, Ms Harpreet Sidhu, Ms Prue Densley, Ms Kelly McMahon and Mr Gary Humphrys



Faces of Mary Aikenhead

If Mary Aikenhead was here today, what would she look like and who would she support?

On Display
2 June - 27 August, 2026

ONE MISSION, MANY MINISTRIES

A SHARED TABLE GATHERING

Biennially, the Trustees host a Mass and Dinner event in each state, bringing together the Sisters of Charity, Trustees, Board Directors, and Ministries. The NSW event was held on 31 March at Mary MacKillop Place.

The evening commenced with Mass celebrated in the Chapel by Fr William Chow, Chaplain of St Vincent's Health Network. This was followed by a pre-dinner welcome and dinner in the dining hall at Mary MacKillop Place.

The overall sentiment shared by attendees was that the evening felt warm, relaxed, and had a genuine family atmosphere. Sr Laureen Dixon rsc, Congregation Leader, offered a beautiful reflection before leading grace.

During the evening, Ms Deirdre O'Donnell, Trustee, shared several upcoming events and initiatives of TMAM, including:

- the Care of the Earth Statement
- the Our Heritage interactive website
- pilgrimages, and
- new formation opportunities.

A/Prof Davinia Seah, Director of Palliative Medicine at Sacred Heart Health Services, was invited to share her experience of mission in action through her work, as well as the fruits of her participation in the 2025 Ireland Pilgrimage.

A/Prof Seah's reflection explored how the mission of Mary Aikenhead Ministries shapes and informs healthcare leadership and service delivery, particularly within palliative care.

Drawing on insights from the 2025 Ireland Pilgrimage and the enduring legacy of the Sisters of Charity, the presentation reflected on the importance of remaining grounded in mission amid contemporary healthcare

pressures, including financial constraints, system demands and changing societal values.

The reflection emphasised that mission is not separate from operational realities, but rather provides the framework for decision-making, advocacy and stewardship. It highlighted the particular call to serve those who are poor and vulnerable, recognising that patients requiring palliative and end-of-life care are often among the most marginalised within healthcare systems.

Through examples from Sacred Heart Hospice, the presentation demonstrated how mission-driven care delivers deeply human outcomes that extend beyond traditional performance measures, including dignity, compassion, relational care and alignment with patient goals.

Ultimately, the reflection affirmed that mission is what differentiates Catholic healthcare ministries, ensuring that even in challenging environments, care remains compassionate, purposeful, and centred on the dignity of every person.





MATER PALLIATIVE CARE OPENING

The Opening and Blessing of the Mater Palliative Care Unit in Sydney marked an important milestone in the ministry's commitment to compassionate, person-centred care. Bringing together staff, supporters, clergy and community members, the occasion celebrated the dedication of a contemporary space designed to provide comfort, dignity and specialised care for patients and their families. The blessing acknowledged the sacredness of the ministry of healing and the ongoing mission of caring for people with compassion, respect and hope at every stage of life.



Mr Paul O'Sullivan (SVHA Board Chair), Ms Penny Wright (Trustee) and Mr Gary Humphrys (Trustee)



PARRAMATTA PILGRIMAGE REFLECTIONS

MS ANGELA AGRICOLA

BOARD CHAIR

ST COLUMBA'S COLLEGE LTD,
ESSENDON

I applied for the Parramatta pilgrimage hoping to gain deeper insight into the charism and its relevance in a contemporary context. I left the experience with far more than I had anticipated.

Sr Margaret Fitzgerald, Sr Genny Walsh and cultural historian Judith Dunn OAM, remarkable and inspiring women, brought the pilgrimage to life in a deeply immersive way through their sharing of story and context. We were transported back in time and invited to reflect on the formidable courage of the first five Sisters of Charity to arrive in Australia. These women ventured into an unfamiliar and often hostile landscape, facing adversity with strength, faith and determination, offering hope and service to those in need.

Each sacred place we visited told a powerful story evoking a profound sense of humility, awe, and gratitude. A poignant moment for me was the river journey. As we travelled comfortably by ferry, I found myself imagining the Sisters making that same journey without comfort or security, carrying with them trepidation, relying on courage, faith, and a deep commitment to their mission as they made their way up the river to Parramatta. That contrast was both sobering and moving.

The day also offered a valuable opportunity to connect with colleagues who share a common purpose, allowing space for reflection, conversation, and shared insight.

I am deeply grateful that I undertook this pilgrimage and extend my sincere thanks to MAM, the organisers and the Sisters for offering such a rich and meaningful spiritual journey.

The pilgrimage will continue to shape how I support collective discernment and keep mission and charism at the heart of our shared stewardship.

MR KRISTOPHER MCMURDY
NATIONAL DIRECTOR OPERATIONS
ST VINCENT'S CARE

One of the highlights of the Parramatta Pilgrimage was being immersed once again in the stories of the Sisters of Charity. I am always drawn to their courage and determination—particularly how much they achieved in the face of overwhelming odds. These stories are not simply historical; they remain deeply relevant as we navigate the complex challenges shaping the future of health and aged care today.

As a leader within St Vincent's Care Services, I draw strong motivation from this legacy. The Sisters' unwavering commitment helps ground my own leadership, encouraging me to stay true to our mission and to lead with purpose and integrity, even when the path is difficult. The pilgrimage reinforced the importance of sharing these stories more widely, so they continue to inspire and sustain those around us.

Beyond the Sisters, the experience also deepened my understanding of Australia's early history and the significant struggles of the time—an important reminder of the resilience that underpins our Mission today.

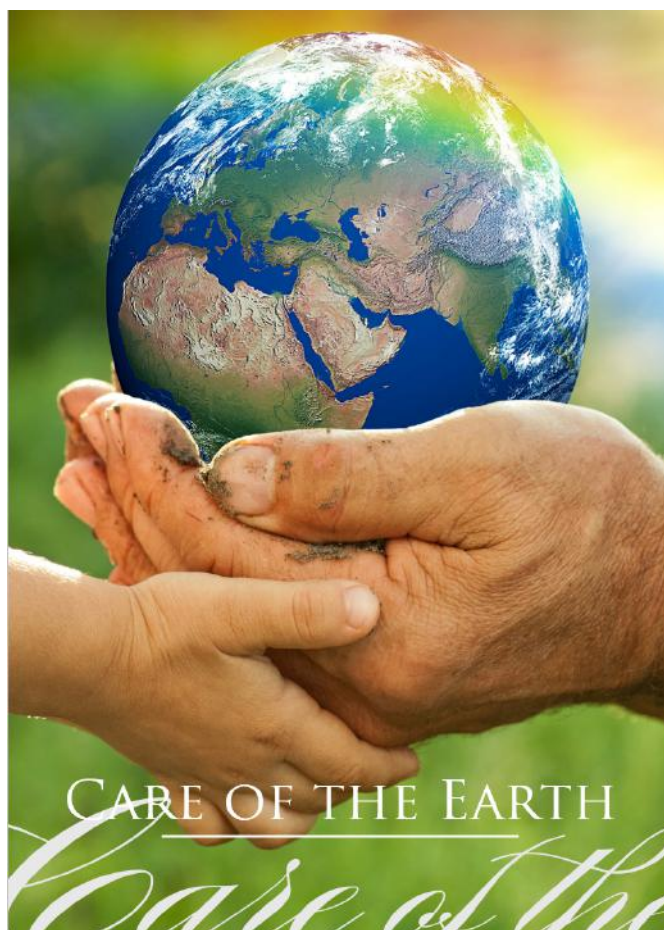
MISSED AN EDITION?

Past editions of Journeys can be found on our website: maryaikenheadministries.com.au



CARE OF THE EARTH STATEMENT

In December 2025, the Trustees approved the TMAM Care of the Earth Statement. This Statement reflects a shared commitment to stewardship of creation and to responding with compassion and responsibility to the environmental challenges facing our world today. Grounded in the values and mission of the Sisters of Charity, the Statement calls TMAM ministries and communities to act with hope, justice and care for our common home through sustainable practices, thoughtful leadership and ongoing formation. It encourages all involved in the ministry to recognise the interconnectedness of people, planet and future generations, and to actively contribute to a more just and sustainable world.



¹ Pope Leo XIV, September 2025, World Prayer Network

² Pope Francis, 2015, Laudato si: On Care for Our Common Home [Encyclical]

CALLED TO STEWARDSHIP A CARE OF THE EARTH STATEMENT

“In discovering God’s presence in all creation, fully recognising it, we may feel and know ourselves to be responsible for this common home where God invites us to care for, respect and protect life in all its forms and possibilities.” Pope Leo XIV¹

More than ten years on from Pope Francis’ encyclical, *Laudato si’* (2015),² the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries affirm the diligence and good practices evident throughout our education, health and aged-care ministries. We recognise that care for the Earth and the cry of the poor remain central to our mission. We are called to enliven and affirm the ecological and social justice principles that ground *Laudato si’*, strengthening our commitment to stewardship and integral ecology.

OUR BELIEF: SACREDNESS OF CREATION

*“God saw everything that God had made, and indeed, it was very good.”*³

Creation reflects God’s enduring goodness and is deserving of reverence, protection and gratitude. We are called to honour and preserve this goodness so that Earth remains a place of life, beauty and justice for all — now and for future generations.

As stewards of creation, our role is one of care, responsibility and mutual relationship with the environment and all living kind.⁴ The natural world is sacred, just as our human identities within creation are sacred. We are called to cultivate harmony with the Earth and to nurture a deep respect for all living beings.

³ Genesis 1:31

⁴ Catechism of the Catholic Church, §§2415–2418

OUR GUIDANCE: WISDOM & HERITAGE

Our commitment to care for the Earth is grounded in Scripture, informed by the teachings of the Church, inspired by the spirit and heritage of the Sisters of Charity, and guided by Catholic Social Teaching. This includes the wisdom of Pope Francis' *Laudato si'*, which affirms the interconnectedness of all creation and the moral imperative to care for our common home. Pope Leo XIV also highlights the relationships of respect and reciprocity with the natural world – relationships that ensure just access to the planet's finite resources and that support the sustainability of the natural environment.⁵

We respectfully acknowledge the spirituality and deep connection of First Nations Peoples with the land, waters, sky and all living things. Their enduring wisdom as Custodians reflects a profound respect for all life in all its forms, inspiring us to learn from this heritage and to deepen our own commitment to respect and care for creation.

Empowered by our faith tradition and informed by the example of First Nations Peoples, we strive to live in harmony with creation and to foster a reverence for all life that shapes our actions and strengthens our shared responsibility for the Earth.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY: PEOPLE & PLANET TOGETHER

We affirm that care of the Earth and the cry of the poor remain at the heart of our mission. We recognise that respect for the natural world and love for our fellow people go hand in hand.

Pope Francis reminded us that "the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor must be heard together"⁶ as the poor and vulnerable suffer disproportionately from environmental harm.⁷ In response, we strive to uphold the dignity of every person by advocating for fair and ethical policies that prioritise the needs

of the marginalised and vulnerable. Through our ongoing commitment to preferential care for the poor, we support initiatives that address inequality and environmental harm, advocating to advance justice for people and planet alike.

OUR FUTURE: ACTING FOR TOMORROW

Pope Francis called us to an "ecological conversion"⁸ of both mindset and action. This call challenges us to embrace a long-term vision for ecological stewardship and to live with a deepened awareness of our responsibility to sustain the Earth.⁹

We are called to enliven the ecological and social justice principles expressed in *Laudato si'*, allowing them to shape and guide our decisions.¹⁰

We affirm our commitment to ongoing engagement and collaboration with key stakeholders to foster a culture of ecological care – a culture that places sustainability at the heart of the mission and operations of our ministries.¹¹

We strive to stand in solidarity with global initiatives that recognise the dignity of every person and that promote ethical environmental protection, economic justice and a culture of peace. These initiatives remind us that the wellbeing of people, the planet and future generations are deeply interdependent.¹²

We seek God's wisdom in making just and sustainable decisions that honour the dignity of all life. May we act with faith, courage and hope, ensuring our stewardship reflects a deep and enduring commitment to protecting all God's creation.

"Let what is good and given to us from the hand of God, be prized and practiced; time will prove its value."

(Everyday Wisdom of Venerable Mary Aikenhead)

⁵ M Sanders in Forbes, May 2025, Ways Pope Leo XIV will lead on climate justice and sustainability

⁶ *Laudato si'*, 49.

⁷ *Laudato si'*, 25

⁸ *Laudato si'*, 217

⁹ *Laudato si'*, 22.

¹⁰ *Laudato si'*, 160

¹¹ *Instrumentum Laboris* for the Synod on Synodality, Vatican 2023, Section B1.2

¹² The Earth Charter, 2000

REFLECTIONS ON OUR *SOCIAL INCLUSION* *STATEMENT*

FIONA HILI
INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER /
ENGLISH & RE TEACHER
ST COLUMBA'S COLLEGE,
ESSENDON



Which of the organisations/ministries within Mary Aikenhead Ministries do you work for, and how long have you been there?

I have worked for the past 22 years at St Columba's College, Essendon.

What is your personal response when reading the *Social Inclusion Statement*? How does it make you feel?

I feel proud and affirmed in the work we do at St Columba's to constantly ensure that a sense of inclusion is a lived reality for all people in our community. I feel affirmed that in the face of the messiness that comes with managing people, we work tirelessly with staff, students and families to be supportive of diversity and specific needs, discerning and consulting with key stakeholders every step of the way. All people need positive, steadfast role models of joy, hope and compassion who respond carefully and wisely to their needs. From day to day, this has been the calling of my role as a Leader and teacher at St Columba's College. I am honoured to work alongside people who are genuinely invested in the growth, dignity and wellbeing of others as they navigate learning through adolescence. This is the reward of an education that is Catholic.

How might the *Social Inclusion Statement* inspire, challenge, or hold you accountable to respond to the needs of those around you and those you serve?

The constant, ever evolving work in the educational landscape is first and foremost to respond to the needs of its students in their learning growth. How every adolescent student experience is vastly different and complex. In a community of over 1000 students, how students, families and their teachers are dignified, and listened to is part of living social authentic inclusion. Resonant with me from the Social Inclusion Statement is the particular quote 'We know that people both individually and communally suffer, are marginalised, and are hurting. These sorrows are ours too.' This is at the heart of inclusion where assumptions and judgements must be left at the door.

Our urgent work in education comes at a time when humanity is at a pivotal juncture. We need each other more than ever. More people are more isolated despite being more 'connected'.

Our resources and options are so plentiful and immediately available that we can tend to lose clarity, purpose and direction.

As an Instructional Leader, there are four of us who work closely with about 23 teachers across various Learning Areas in a coaching

capacity to support the ways learning is delivered in and beyond the classrooms and ensure our students benefit from their endless efforts, consistency of practice and levels of care. This involves often difficult accountability conversations at the end of which it is our intention that someone feels heard, understood, support structures are in place and actively followed through.

The flow on effects of this work are measured in the way any person is then able to move forward as an included and valued member of our community and thrives as a learner.

How do you see your ministry/organisation living out the values found within the *Social Inclusion Statement*? Please provide one to two examples of initiatives taking place in your workplace.

Mary Aikenhead and her sisters went to the coalface, uncloistered themselves and did the hard work of leaning into the difficulties to respond to the needs of the people. They knew and acknowledged that the land they came to belonged to its first people.

It is this point of understanding that runs at the heart of our recently launched '30-60-90' timetable structure for 2027. At St Columba's we have always worked strategically to prioritise diversity. This model has come from extensive consultation and research over the last 8 years. In our current planning phase, Teaching Teams together with our extensive Learning Diversity Team are designing learning opportunities to include more contact time to foster and improve working relationships with teachers. This can also mean that sometimes a student needs to spend some quiet time unravelling from the intensity of their day – to be noticed and valued. Lessons are mostly being planned in 'chunks' of 30 minutes, where feasible. All lessons and resources are always available online via our SEQTA portal. We believe this model provides further flexible opportunities for all students to be supported in the ways that best suit their specific and highly diverse needs in these complex times.

In opening every College assembly our Co Captains proudly announce:

As an inclusive faith community, we acknowledge that we are all made in the image and likeness of God and we are created in love. This means that all faiths, genders, sexualities, cultures, and abilities are therefore respected, accepted, and welcome in our community. This connects to our school's theme for the year, Justice, which reminds us of the importance of living a life guided by the values of fairness, equity, and standing up for what is right, which are all central values to our community.'

It is by this that we can only hope, 'that everyone will know.'



Mary Aikenhead Ministries offers Parramatta pilgrimages over the year:

- 9 July (nominations due 7 May)
- 13 August (nominations due 10 June)
- 8 September (nominations due 8 July)

Ministry employees are to enrol via their Ministry's pilgrimage process. Those external to Mary Aikenhead Ministries please email:



Events@maministries.com.au

REFLECTIONS ON OUR *SOCIAL INCLUSION* STATEMENT

MS AMY MATTHEW
STRATEGY & PLANNING LEAD
ST VINCENT'S HOSPITAL SYDNEY



Which of the organisations/ministries within Mary Aikenhead Ministries do you work for, and how long have you been there?

St Vincents Hospital, Sydney, 20 years.

What is your personal response when reading the *Social Inclusion Statement*? How does it make you feel?

Reading this document fills me with a sense of warmth and hope, as its message of welcome and shared humanity feels genuinely heartfelt rather than just institutional language. It's also quietly moving to see an organisation so openly commit to sitting with the world's pain — "these sorrows are ours too" — rather than looking away from it.

How might the *Social Inclusion Statement* inspire, challenge, or hold you accountable to respond to the needs of those around you and those you serve?

This statement inspires me to see people as sacred and worthy of dignity, not just in words but in my daily actions. It challenges me to move beyond comfort and actively help those who are vulnerable or marginalised in my community. It holds me accountable to examine whether my spaces and interactions are genuinely welcoming. Most powerfully, it reminds me that the suffering of others is not separate from me.

How do you see your ministry/organisation living out the values found within the *Social Inclusion Statement*? Please provide one to two examples of initiatives taking place in your workplace.

Our organisation lives out these values by running the Homeless Health outreach program which provides health and social care to those experiencing homelessness, embodying the statement's call to ensure all people have equal access to resources for survival and comfort. Another example is our Aboriginal Health program, where we provide culturally safe healthcare that honours the wisdom, identity, and dignity of First Nations peoples. This initiative directly reflects the statement's call to walk alongside those who have been historically marginalised, recognising that true inclusion means working to break barriers and ensuring that care is delivered in a way that respects and celebrates Aboriginal culture, connection to country, and community.

THE FACES OF MAM

MR ANDREW ROMA

GENERAL MANAGER

ACUTE STREAM

ST VINCENT'S HEALTH AUSTRALIA



Which of the organisations within Mary Aikenhead Ministries do you work for, and how long have you been there?

I work in the strategy team and lead our transformation work for the Private Hospital Division.

The MAM values are love, justice, compassion, hope. Which of these resonates most with you and why?

Right now, we're working to deliver the initial implementation requirements for the Bringing Care Home strategy, which will enable us to provide care in people's homes and reach people who currently experience some of the most difficult barriers to accessing care. As a result, the value that most resonates with me is *hope*: hope that we will succeed in the delivery of the Bringing Care Home plan, but a greater hope that we will successfully transform the health system to deliver better care for our patients and Australians more broadly.

What do you think sets your organization/ministry apart from other workplaces?

I think our mission sets our private hospitals apart from other private hospital groups. Our mission provides a clear direction as to why we deliver the care that we do, and most importantly, why we don't settle for second best or for delivering more of the same. The work that our pioneering founders delivered

remains inspiring over 100 years later. The Sisters of Charity inspire us to keep pushing the boundaries on what is possible in the healthcare system, to not accept the status quo, and to keep striving to deliver the most innovative and highest quality healthcare possible.

If you were to have lunch with Venerable Mary Aikenhead today, what story would you tell her about your work?

Although potentially daunting, lunch with Venerable Mary Aikenhead would be an amazing experience. I would relish the opportunity to tell her the story of how we have commenced our shift to delivering 50% of our care in the home, away from the hospital, so that patients receive the care they need in the setting that best suits them. I think she would appreciate the resonance with her Walking Nuns who also went to people in their homes. However, I would also be prepared for Venerable Mary Aikenhead's reply – how can you do it quicker, faster and be bolder!

THE FACES OF MAM

MS MONICA KACELA
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER
ST COLUMBA'S COLLEGE,
ESSENDON



Which of the organisations/ministries within Mary Aikenhead Ministries do you work for, and how long have you been there?

I commenced at St Columba's College at the beginning of 2025, so almost 18 months.

The MAM values are love, justice, compassion, hope. Which of these resonates most with you and why?

Compassion resonates most strongly with me. In people-focused leadership and particularly in human resources, I believe compassion is what allows us to support and bring out the best in others — especially during times of challenge, change, or uncertainty.

I value creating environments where people feel heard, respected, and cared for, while still being encouraged to grow and take accountability. Whether supporting staff wellbeing, navigating difficult conversations, or working collaboratively within a school community, I believe compassion helps build trust, connection, and a strong sense of belonging.

For me, compassion is not simply about kindness; it is about understanding people's experiences and responding with empathy, fairness, and humanity.

What do you think sets your organization/ministry apart from other workplaces?

What sets St Columba's College apart from other workplaces is the strong sense of purpose and community that underpins

everything we do. Unlike many workplaces, our focus extends beyond outcomes and performance measures — we are committed to nurturing the spiritual, emotional, and personal growth of each individual within our community.

I believe that the College's values-driven approach creates an environment where relationships, wellbeing, compassion, and service to others are genuinely prioritised. There is a deep commitment to ensuring people feel seen, heard, valued, and connected, and that every individual has the opportunity to contribute meaningfully and feel a genuine sense of belonging.

I also think the emphasis on faith, justice, and hope gives the work a greater sense of meaning. People are not simply working towards organisational goals; they are contributing to something larger — helping shape communities where dignity, inclusion, and care for others are central.

If you were to have lunch with Venerable Mary Aikenhead today, what story would you tell her about your work?

If I were to have lunch with Mary Aikenhead today, I would tell her about the privilege of working within a community where the charism of the Sisters of Charity is truly lived and breathed each and every day.

I would share stories of staff and students supporting one another with compassion, dignity, and generosity — particularly during difficult times — and the way our community

strives to ensure people feel seen, heard, valued, and cared for. I would speak about the importance placed on wellbeing, inclusion, justice, and creating environments where people can flourish both personally and professionally.

I would also tell her that her vision continues to have a profound impact today: that through everyday acts of kindness, service, advocacy, and leadership, her legacy continues to shape lives and strengthen communities. I think she would be proud that her spirit of compassion and hope remains at the heart of the work we do.

In reply I think Mary Aikenhead might remind us that the most important work is often found in the small, everyday moments — how we treat people, how we listen, and how we respond to those who are vulnerable or struggling.

Perhaps she would say that true leadership is grounded in compassion and courage and encourage us to continue creating communities where every person feels seen, heard, and valued. I think she would also challenge us to never become complacent — to keep asking how we can better serve others, advocate for justice, and lead with both humility and hope

Most of all, I believe she would be happy and content to see that her vision and the charism of the Sisters of Charity continue to shape the culture of the College community in such a meaningful and practical way each and every day.

CALENDAR

JUNE 2026

5	World Environment Day
7	Most Holy Body & Blood of Christ
8	Kings Birthday (NSW/VIC)
9	Parramatta Pilgrimage 2
12	Sacred Heart of Jesus
13	St Anthony of Padua
	Most Immaculate Heart of Mary
15	One Mission, Many Ministries Mass & Dinner – QLD
24	Nativity of St John the Baptist
29	St Peter & St Paul

JULY 2026

1	Mission Inspired Leadership Formation
3	St Thomas
22	Anniversary of Venerable Mary Aikenhead
	St Mary Magdalene
23	Venerable Mary Aikenhead Oration
25	St James
31	St Ignatius Loyola

AUGUST 2026

6	Transfiguration of the Lord
8	St Mary of the Cross MacKillop
9	International Day of the world's Indigenous Peoples
10	St Lawrence
12	Ekka Show Day (BRIS)
15	The Assumption
17	One Mission, Many Ministries Mass & Dinner – VIC

GETTING MORE OUT OF THE JOURNEY

REFLECTION RESOURCE

MS LOUWANA SABA

MISSION & FORMATION DIRECTOR
MARY AIKENHEAD MINISTRIES



Want to get more out of the *Journeys* articles? Here are some prepared discussion or reflection questions based on Ms Wrights article on page 3 you might like to use for personal reflection, or as formation during a meeting etc.

1. The article suggests that justice is about restoring dignity, not simply enforcing rules or determining who is right and wrong. Where do you see this kind of justice in your work?
2. Mary Aikenhead met people on the margins as individuals worthy of care and respect. Who are the people most at risk of being overlooked in our ministry today? And why?
3. The article reminds us that every person possesses inherent dignity. How do we demonstrate that belief in our daily interactions with patients, residents, students, families, colleagues, community, neighbours, or those we serve?
4. What current issue or challenge in our workplace calls us to act more justly, both for individuals and for the wider community?
5. Jesus taught us in the writings of Matthew's Gospel: "*Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.*" What is one action you could take this week to bring that principle to life?

Closing Invitation

What is one insight or challenge from this reflection that you will carry into your work and relationships this month?





MARY
AIKENHEAD
MINISTRIES



Suite 103, Level 1
26-30 Spring Street
BONDI JUNCTION NSW 2022



+61 2 9291 9400



info@maministries.com.au



www.maryaikenheadministries.com.au