



# MSEA

Australasian Mercy Secondary Education Association

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## IDEAS FOR CELEBRATING MERCY DAY

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# All Hallows' School Brisbane

## Mercy Celebrations

### 1. WHOLE SCHOOL MASSES

**The Inaugural mass** at the beginning of the year includes the induction of school leaders and commitment of all staff and students to our mercy values. The Congregational Leader of the Sisters of Mercy, Brisbane is invited to present badges.

**The All Hallows' Day Mass** (on November 1) celebrates all the saints, both past and present, who have been part of our story. There is a strong emphasis on women leaders and on multicultural inclusivity.

Mercy elements include

- procession of large picture of our Lady of Mercy/statue of Our Lady brought to school by early sisters.
- singing of "Mercy" hymns eg. the Suscipe, The Circle of Mercy, Mercy Alive, God's Mercy is from Age to Age, Mother of Mercy.
- reading out of selection of names from the school registrar since 1861.
- readings and prayers in languages other than English to emphasize inclusion.

### 2. FOUNDATION DAY (10<sup>TH</sup> MAY 1861)

**Mass:** voluntary mass before school, prepared by students and staff

- story of the foundation included on mass leaflet.
- reproduction of painting of arrival of first sisters.
- distribution of sayings by Catherine McAuley to individuals or representatives of Home Groups, to be displayed in classrooms.
- ritual tolling of the bell brought by the first Sisters, echoing the pronouncement of their names.

**Assembly:** full school assembly with extended prayer reflection

- students dressed as Sisters; re-enactment of parts of story.
- readings from letters of founding Sisters.
- powerpoint presentation of contemporary mercy ministries.
- Foundation Open Air Dance around the flagpole; lunch-time celebrations organised by student leaders, celebrating Catherine McAuley's sense of community fun.

3. **MERCY DAY MASS:** held on closest Wednesday morning to Mercy Day, which generally falls in school holidays.

- Readings (usually Sirah 27:1-3, 7-9; John 2: 1-11) presented in dialogue, with mime.
- recently celebrated in conjunction with Grandparents' Day: theme of Mercy throughout the generations.
- symbols include water jars, coloured fabrics.
- Use of picture of Our Lady of Mercy.

- distribution of Mercy prayer cards.
4. **DEATH OF CATHERINE McAULEY:** mid week mass
- introduction includes narration of last hours of Catherine’s life, including reflections on her Mercy life.
  - distribution of bookmarks including quote “a comfortable cup of tea”, with tea-bag attached.
5. **HOUSE DAY CELEBRATIONS:** Our Houses have direct links with our Mercy story eg. Coolock House, Mercedes House, Whitty House. Each House organises its own “Day” and includes a mass/prayer service relevant to its story.

Margery Jackman  
**Deputy Principal – Mission**

## **Bunbury Catholic College**

### **Mercy Day, Bunbury style**

At Bunbury Catholic College we can proudly say that we have two charisms that we honour. Fortunately, both the Mercy Sisters and the Marist Brothers have a special devotion to Mary and as such we use the Feast of the Assumption (15<sup>th</sup> August) to celebrate our traditions. Bishop Holohan, will begin this day for us, by celebrating a College Mass, centred on a Marian theme. Following Mass a number of different activities are planned including a concert, stalls and celebratory cakes. The concert is designed to acknowledge the wealth of talent that exists here in our school. Often the finale of the concert is a staff skit which tends to convince the students that the teachers are human albeit devoid of talent. We always try to use students in as much of the organisation of the day as possible. Thus, they will be integral in the planning and running of the Eucharist and the Student Council will be proactive in developing the stalls. This year we will be encouraging the students to organise their concert items with other students from their house group and in so doing qualify for house points which lead to the overall House Shield.

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## **Catholic College Wodonga Catholic College Day Friday 12 September 2005**

Catholic College Wodonga celebrates its feast day on the second last Friday of Term 3 each year. Classes are cancelled from recess with an alternative program in operation including a free lunch and students are permitted to wear free dress (with a gold coin donation to Mercy Refugee Service).

The focus for the day in 2005 will be Social Justice. A liturgy will start proceedings with the whole school community gathered in the McAuley Arts Centre. During the liturgy we will mission our Year 11 REMAR students who begin a solidarity camp in a Catholic primary school in Condobolin (mid-western NSW) the following week. The SRC have invited Anna Healey (mother, teacher and international class gold-medal winning disability sailor) to address the College community. Following an extended lunch with games organised by the SRC, the College will retire again to the Arts Centre for a Talent Quest organised by the Arts KLA.

The day is a wonderful celebration of our heritage and the debt we owe to the Sisters of Mercy and their vision for Catholic education in Wodonga.

Mr Christopher Cotter	Josh Boyes	Matthew McEvoy
<b>Faith &amp; Ministry Leader</b>	<b>College Captain</b>	<b>College Vice-Captain</b>

## **Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta Celebrating Mercy Day**

For most of the students at OLMC Mercy Day is the favourite day of the year. It is a day of tremendous fun and celebration which really captures something of the special spirit of this College.

Preparations for our Liturgy begin months before the day and literally hundreds of students volunteer to be involved. They involve themselves in areas such as music, readings, dance, processions, light, sound, video production, technical set up etc. We try and ensure there is something for everyone to do so that they can get involved and experience a sense of ownership in the celebration.

We also endeavour to provide a way to have everyone in the College thinking about the theme or preparing themselves with some reflection before the day. This often takes place under the guidance of Religious Education teachers who spend some time reflecting on aspects of the theme and guiding students in their own reflection.

Further preparations take place during fortnightly chapel assemblies when each year group in turn gathers in the chapel for a prayer led by the College Principal. In the weeks leading up to Mercy Day these prayers are drawn from the theme of the coming Mercy Day and provide another opportunity for reflection and preparation.

An important part of the Mercy Day liturgy is the lighting of a Mercy candle. This candle takes the place of the paschal candle during all College liturgies and important occasions throughout the year. The candle design is based on the theme of the Mercy Day celebrations and is usually designed by a student or staff member. In some years we have held a competition to choose the candle design.

Each year a theme is chosen for our liturgy which reflects something of the Mercy Charism. Last year we reflected on and celebrated God's dream for our world. This year we are preparing our reflection around the idea of Mercy as a life giving force.

When our preparations are finished we will have a celebration that includes aspects of visual art, technology, music, dance and drama to engage with our community in the celebration of Eucharist. The liturgy always has many memorable moments and students readily recall aspects of the celebrations for years to come.

At the conclusion of the liturgy there is always a joyful singing of the College song "Alma Mater" after which students and staff enjoy a carnival atmosphere in the grounds with attractions such as a bush band, sausage sizzle, fairy floss and jumping castle being popular aspects of the celebrations.

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## **Mercedes College, Perth**

### **Mercy Day**

Mercy Day will be celebrated on Friday 23 September which is the last day of Term 3 in West Australia.

The format for the day is as follows:

- Mass in the Cathedral officiated by Archbishop Barry Hickey
- Morning Tea
- College Assembly with guest speaker [usually the Congregational Leader]
- Lunch provided by College
- Entertainment: games and concert
- Announcement of the 2006 Student Council
- Return to Homeroom: collection of Mercy Day present and dismissal.

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## **St Aloysius College Adelaide**

### **Mercy day celebrations**

Mercy day is one of the most important feast days we celebrate at St Aloysius College. Our mercy day festivities occur in the last week of term 3. We participate in a whole school Mass on the Wednesday and conclude the term with a mercy day carnival on the Friday.

St Aloysius College was founded by sisters of mercy from Argentina. We have a strong link with St Ethnea's, a mercy school in Argentina. Our choir has visited the school and one of our teachers taught their last year. Both our students and staff were involved in an outreach program and our whole school community continues to support this program in Argentina.

During our mercy day mass we focus on mercy and our work in Argentina. Our students celebrated mercy day at St Ethnea's last year and sent us a beautiful powerpoint presentation of their experiences both at the school and in the outreach program. The background music for the powerpoint presentation was the choir singing circle of mercy.

On the last day of term 3 all students are involved in our mercy day carnival. Classes and year level groups run their own stalls. These consist of a haunted house, food stalls, beauty parlours, games, throw the wet sponge at the teacher, cafes and a wide range of other activities.

We finish the day with a concert performed by our various music groups. We usually raise over \$2,000.00 which supports our work in Argentina.

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## **St Brigid's College Lesmurdie**

### **Mercy Day**

At St Brigid's College, we spread our particular focus and celebration of our Mercy heritage over all of Third Term. All our College fundraising goes to Mercy Missions and this year we are encouraging our students to donate regularly to assist in raising the money required for an outboard motor. This is for a little boat our ex-principal, Sr Kaye Bolwell, is using to visit island communities off the coast of Papua New Guinea.

In addition we have several students who attended the Mercy Workshops in South Australia and they are actively fund and awareness raising with badge and bracelet selling across the College.

Our Mercy week is the last week of Term and we have a Mercy Dinner in the Boarding School with Mercy Sisters as our special guests. There is a guest speaker on "Living Mercy Today" and the theme is Blue and White. Our boarding counsellors for the next year are announced on this night and encouraged to follow the Sisters' example.

On the last day of Term free dress is allowed for a gold coin donation and everyone is encouraged to dress in the theme of blue and white in recognition of Our Lady of Mercy.

The Mercy Day Mass is also held on the last day of Term, and involves all students from Kindergarten to Year 12. Secondary students remain after Mass for the presentation of the Mercy in Action Service Award to one of our five houses and the Student Representative Council for the following year is announced. Sisters of Mercy are our honoured guests at Mass and demonstrate the Mercy Heritage our leaders must continue to develop.

Many other fundraising activities take place on this day. A new initiative introduced this year by our Ministry leaders is a “Student Fair” with each class responsible for a stall and every student involved in some way – this promises to be an exciting day. In the afternoon, students enjoy a display of their talents at a Mercy Cultural Festival.

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## **Santa Maria College, Perth**

### **Mercy Day**

Mercy Day will be celebrated on Friday 23 September, the last day of Term 3 in West Australia. There are three parts to the day: Mass, Stalls/Activities and a Sponsored Walkathon.

9.00 – 10.30am      *Whole College Mass.*

A Mercy focus for Term 3 has been a House competition involving the collection of aluminium ring pulls for recycling into the manufacture of wheelchairs for landmines victims. The winner will be announced at the end of the mass as well as the winner of the poster or logo competition based on value ‘Justice’, one of the College’s Mercy values.

11.00 – 12.30pm      *Activities:*

Each Homeroom is responsible for running a stall or activity. Examples include a treasure hunt, handball competition, lucky dip, jewellery making and sausage sizzle. Funds raised will go to a Mercy project.

1.30 – 3pm      *Sponsored Walkathon*

with funds going to the Mercy project supported by each of the six Houses.

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## **St Saviour's College Toowoomba Our Lady of Mercy Day**

### **Celebrating Catherine McAuley Day 2005**

St Saviour's College, Toowoomba, celebrated Catherine McAuley Day on May 10, commemorating the day in 1861 when the first Sisters of Mercy arrived in Brisbane. The day included a shared morning tea, liturgy and quiz.

Because of an earlier postponement due to bad weather, the school's cross country competition was staged in the morning so we began our focus on Catherine after this event with a shared morning tea held in Homeclass rooms. Teachers and students all brought in goodies to share and so the community building had well and truly begun by the time we gathered for our liturgy at 11am.

Our liturgy took as its theme, "Imagine the Spirit of Catherine in our lives." The focus was on recognising the enduring Mercy values of Compassion, Hospitality, Excellence and Justice as they are lived out in each person.

Prior to the day, each Homeclass was allocated a letter from these Mercy values and issued with a piece of cardboard on which to inscribe and decorate the letter. During the liturgy we focussed on each value in turn and representatives from each homeclass brought forth their letters to form a banner across the front of the stage. We listened to readings, sang songs and said prayers, each helping us to understand more about how the Mercy values are relevant in our world.

A student and a teacher then shared powerful stories of where they had encountered the spirit of Catherine in their lives. The girls were spellbound by the realities that each speaker recalled. We concluded the liturgy with an anointing ceremony, challenging the girls to go out to the world imbued with the spirit of Catherine.

Off then to Homeclass where the quiz was completed, with a variety of questions about the school, its history and the life of Catherine. As well as factual information there was a light-hearted element to the quiz, requiring the girls to count bricks in specific locations, locate objects around the school and identify faces in photographs. Fun and laughter could be heard all over the school and few were overly concerned with winning the (food) prize for the best result on the quiz.

There was a definite buzz around the college on May 10 and the spirit of Catherine was clearly evident in the heightened sense of community that was produced.

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# **St Mary's College Wellington**

## **St Mary's Day Liturgy for Year 9 Students**

**Welcome:** Head Girl

**Opening Prayer:** Senior student

**Lighting of Candles:** 1 representative from each class with student to bring forth a Level candle.

**Reading:** Many parts of one body: 1 Cor 12:12

**Reflection:** Student – what it means to me to be a St Mary's Student

### **Intercessions:**

We pray for those who are suffering from sickness of hunger, especially those without a family and home. Please help us to support them in any way we can. Lord hear us

Help us to remember to share what gifts we have – maybe it is to teach someone or to help in other ways. Whatever it is that we can give help us to act like Catherine McAuley. Lord hear us.

Thank you for the gift of friendship and for the new friends we have made today. Knowing that there is always someone there gives us comfort. May we always treat each other with respect. Lord hear us.

### **Hail Mary**

### **Closing Prayer**

In a world wanting the touch of Mercy, Catherine McAuley's example is encouraging. She had no great plan, only a desire to make some lasting effort for God's poor. She responded in a way that was practical and immediate. As we conclude our day may we accept this invitation to walk in the path of Mercy, to help those in need. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**School Song to finish**

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