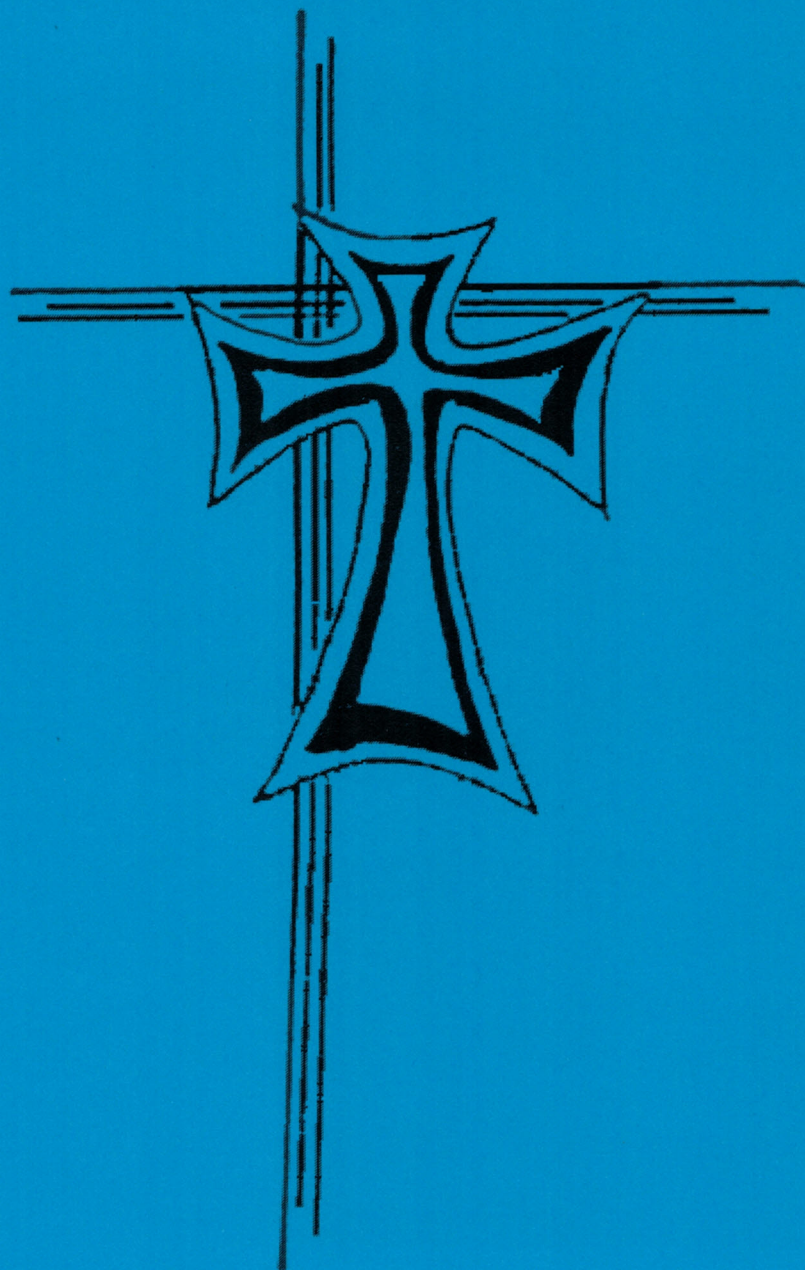


Sisters of Mercy Wiri



2018/2019 Annual Report

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Brief History

In 1988 Sisters of Mercy responded to an invitation by local Maori women and came to live in Wiri. Sister Anne Hurley and Sister Margaret Martin established the community based agency Sisters of Mercy Wiri in 1990 in response to growing community needs. For ten years Anne and Margaret worked from the house which the Sisters had built themselves. The establishment of the Wiri Centre in 2000 was a joint initiative between Sisters of Mercy Wiri and Wiri Central School and in November 2000 the service relocated to the Wiri Centre.

As an active community based not for profit organisation Sisters of Mercy Wiri delivered a range of services and programmes. The agency also contributed to a number of regional forums that focussed on improving social outcomes, health and wellbeing in the region.

In December 2009 Sisters of Mercy Wiri Trust relinquished all formal contracts, both funding and employment and vacated the Wiri Centre. Margaret and Anne continue to live and work in Wiri. They are now freer to be open to the unexpected and awake to new possibilities.

The ministry of Sisters of Mercy Wiri embodies the mission of the Catholic Religious Congregation of women, Nga Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa Sisters of Mercy New Zealand, founded by Catherine McAuley in Dublin in 1831 to work with the poor, especially women and children.

Our Mission

*To work with the poor, especially women and children,
to build positive relationships that strengthen families and communities
and to join with others to bring about a more just and compassionate society.*

Animated by Gospel values and Catholic Social Teaching we respond with Christ's love to the needs and concerns of the economically, materially, emotionally, politically and spiritually poor, especially women and children.

Treaty of Waitangi

Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi is New Zealand's founding document and Sisters of Mercy Wiri is committed to honouring Te Tiriti as a principle for the way in which we work.

Guiding Principles

- Work with all people of goodwill towards the transformation of society to bring about the reign of God
- Promote the value that all persons are called to family, community and participation
- Facilitate community development by involving neighbourhood and community participation
- Embrace the multi-cultural character of Wiri and recognise and value all cultures and ethnic groups that are represented in the local community
- Participate in processes to influence those who exercise power and make decisions affecting the lives of others

Works of Mercy

Feed the hungry
Clothe the naked
Welcome the stranger
Bury the dead

Give drink to the thirsty
Visit the imprisoned
Heal the sick
Care for our common home

"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

John 10:10

Board of Trustees



From left to right: Sr Margaret Martin, Tony Horan, Ruth Spelman (Chair), Catherine Dodson, Sr Anne Hurley and in absentia Graham Goldsmith

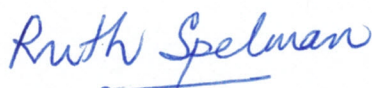
Chairperson's Report

It is my pleasure to present the Annual Report for the year to June 2019 on behalf of the Sisters of Mercy Wiri Trust Board. On 1 September 2018 we celebrated the 30 year anniversary of Sisters of Mercy Wiri coming to Wiri. This event was a joyful occasion with a large gathering of Sisters, community supporters and friends. Planning for the Anniversary was a significant focus for the Board and we all shared in the sense of accomplishment when the event was held successfully.

Otherwise the Board has continued to work within its strategic plan with regular meetings. Board members appreciated the opportunity to take part in the Hui Taumata held in July and particularly enjoyed the boat trip reliving the final part of the journey of the first Sisters of Mercy to Auckland.

The Board continues to work well as a team and gives significant time to scripture based reflections at the beginning of our meetings. We continue to affirm the mix of work done by Anne and Margaret in the community.

My thanks to Catherine Dodson, Tony Horan and Graham Goldsmith to all those who support the work of Sisters of Mercy Wiri. Finally my thanks to Margaret and Anne in their role as Board Members.



Ruth Spelman
Chairperson

Ministry Report

Through direct service
and through our influence
we seek to relieve suffering
to address its causes,
to support those who struggle for full dignity
and to care for the earth.

#7 Constitutions of the Sisters of Mercy NZ p15

Sisters of Mercy Wiri held a significant celebration capturing 30 years of ministry – living and working in Wiri - on the first day of spring, 1 September. The reflections shared on that occasion by Ruth Spelman, the Chairperson of our Trust Board and Sisters Anne and Margaret are included in this Annual Report. It was a wonderful time of remembrance and the weather even came to the party!

The words from the Constitutions of Nga Whaea Atawahai o Aotearoa Sisters of Mercy NZ quoted above encapsulate our ministry as we continue 30 years plus. Through our presence and availability as women religious in today's world, we respond to requests and invitations to assist, facilitate, collaborate and engage.

Through direct service in the past year we have provided assistance with food, Christmas kai and gifts, transport, housing advocacy, verification of documents for residency or passport applications and/or renewal, enrolment forms for high school, stationery packs for students at Wiri Central School, facilitated meetings with families and local school, provided workplace encouragement and supported grieving families. Visiting families in their homes and hospital visits too, are always a mutual blessing.

Through our influence we participate and contribute to a number of networks and groups which seek to address structural and systemic change, to alleviate poverty, housing need, food insecurity and fair wages. We join with others who give voice to these issues which includes Tenants Protection Association Housing Issue Sub Committee, Housing Advocates Group which meets quarterly with regional leaders of Housing New Zealand (now Kainga Ora) and the Ministry of Social Development, NZ Council Christian Social Services, Impacts of Poverty and Exclusion Group, Auckland Catholic Housing Network, Te Ohu Whakawhanaunga – a NZ Community Alliance and Living Wage Aotearoa.

Our concern for the poor and for social and ecological justice permeates our call to see, to discern and to serve. This year in particular has seen us lend our voice

to working more closely with agencies and committees of the Catholic Diocese of Auckland who are members of the Auckland Catholic Housing Network. These include de Paul House, Catholic Social Services, Monte Cecilia and the Housing Affordability Committee of the Justice and Peace Commission. At the invitation of Bishop Pat Dunn we have contributed to the Care for the poor and marginalized working Group, one of three priority areas identified in the development of the Diocesan Pastoral and Strategic Direction Plan.

Supporting those who struggle for full dignity includes our ministry with the women incarcerated at the Auckland Regional Women's Correction Facility in Wiri. Through the Seasons for Growth Programme and monthly Church services which we lead we offer opportunities for recognition, acceptance, healing and personal growth. Our faithful volunteers, Veronica, Daniella and Trisha, freely give of their time to assist with the Church service.

A local example **to care for the earth** which we are currently exploring with businesses Downer and Spotless, Wiri Central School, and the Wiri Business Association has resulted in what has been named 'Neighbourhood Stream Clean'. At this stage we are committed to 4 clean-ups a year – Summer, Winter, Autumn and Spring – beginning in November 2019. This is not the first time we have worked alongside concerned organisations and the local school to clean-up our local reserve, pond and stream. It is envisaged that by aligning and collaborating with like-minded people of action and the local community in an ongoing project we have more chance of long term success. With the support and sponsorship of Brent Condon from Downer, this neighbourhood/community initiative is set to heighten awareness of kaitiakitanga, our personal and community responsibility to look after the environment and our waterways.

We respectfully and with affection conclude this Report with the words from one of the many cards, notes and emails we received on the celebration of 30 years.

Congratulations Margaret and Anne on all the years of amazing work and dedication; and on your care for the community. Also on your constant battle towards improving the system and people's lives despite opposition, neoliberalism and right-wing nonsense and rhetoric. You have both done an outstanding job which is admired by so many people, especially me. Best wishes and love.

Our heartfelt thanks to all have supported Sisters of Mercy Wiri during the year. We are blessed with a very generous and supportive board of trustees whose contribution and encouragement enriches our life and ministry.



Margaret Martin
Community Social Worker



Anne Hurley
Community Social Worker

Thank you

We acknowledge with gratitude the generous support and assistance of those who have contributed in a variety of ways over the past year.

Camilla and Jon Maplesdon
Countdown Manukau
Denise Gregory
Flowerise
Gattings Events and Catering
Mary MacKillop Care Centre
The Good Shepherd Sisters
Veronica and Daniella Rudolph

Neil Roper
Patricia Jordon
Sarah Hart
Spotless Facility Services (NZ) Ltd
Steven Fan
St Anne's School
Salvation Army, Manukau
Wiri Central School

Sisters of Mercy Wiri 30 Year Celebration

the loveliness of Spring gifts us Hope



1 September 1988 - 1 September 2018

'Never doubt the Spring'

Firstly a thank you to my husband Tony. We appreciate your mihi to our guests on behalf of the Board. We welcome the kaupapa of celebration that we can participate in today. Thank you all for coming and for your support of this ministry over many years. It is delightful to have so many local residents, so many Sisters, former Board members and long time supporters here today.

When I first joined the Board of Sisters of Mercy Wiri Tony and I were living in Mangere Bridge and Tony was working at Manukau City Council. Those were good days with lively Waitangi Day events in Manukau City, protests, and many community consultations and plans. I remember walking on the new SH20 when the Puhinui section was opened and as always Anne and Margaret were there among the community enjoying the walk.

One of the features of our Board meetings are the Ministry reports presented to us. Economic in style and sensitive they document a purposeful story of ministry and would make a great basis for a reflection on effective Catholic mission. Over the years Anne and Margaret delivered the bread and were available to local people while also contributing significantly to national level advocacy work on housing and social services. Even a list of the submissions they have written over the years is impressive and I know how those were often written in small chunks between attending to more immediate needs.

Many in Housing NZ and Auckland City Council know that coming up against the documented evidence gathered by Anne and Margaret can be daunting and their quiet manner belies a stubbornness for a good cause. I myself encountered this stubbornness in seeking new Board members; it never seemed urgent enough until I insisted and we now have three wonderful Board members Catherine, Graham and Tony all from the Manurewa parish. In all of this it is the overwhelming personal kindness of these two good women which marks them out. There was a period when I needed to take time out and their care for me during that time was a real encouragement. I know that many of you have experienced that same kindness many times.

Thinking about today I have been struck by how traditional Anne and Margaret have been as Sisters of Mercy; the original Sisters in Dublin left the convent to go out into the streets to serve the poor and their founder Catherine McAuley challenged traditional expectations. And in Auckland 30 years ago Margaret and Anne went through a careful process of discernment and then made a commitment to go out into the streets of Wiri to serve the poor.

We know that going out from something that has become established like teaching ministry involves risk and the possibility of failure. One risk is that the work may not be well understood by others. I have seen how the practice of prayerful discernment has distinguished ministry initiatives and how a disciplined life has given Anne and Margaret the basis from which to be steadfast in their commitment.

Today we salute you both and thank you for your commitment, your persistence, your prayerfulness and modesty of style and your courage in speaking up for the poor not once, not twice, but again and again and again.

We have all been part of your story in some particular way and we treasure those links and assure you that we will continue to support you in the years ahead. The more we know of the story of the Sisters of Mercy the more we see you giving Catherine's vision new expression and new energy. May God bless you and the work you do abundantly.

Ruth Spelman
Chairperson
Sisters of Mercy Wiri Trust

Tena koutou katoa, Talofa lava, Malo lelei, Kia Orana – Warm greetings everyone.

30 years ago today on the first of September, the first day of Spring 1988, Marie Brown, Margaret Martin and Anne Hurley moved into this house at 14 Trevor Hosken Drive. It was a cold, wet Thursday evening, but our hearts were warmed by the thrill of arriving, after months of building, planning and working towards getting here.

So the first day of Spring has always been a significant and symbolic date to us. On the occasion of the blessing of the house, we were gifted with a verse from James K Baxter's poem "Song to the Holy Spirit".

*Lord Holy Spirit,
in the love of friends you are building a new house.
You are singing your song in the hearts of the poor
Guide us, wound us, heal us."*

These words encapsulated for us what we were about when we first came here. We had built a house. Yes. But we wanted that building to continue as we got to know our neighbours and settled into the community. We came open to possibilities. Little did we know then how much 'guiding, wounding and healing' that would shape us and that we would experience through the years. During those early years Marie was called to follow a different path. But the seeds had been sown and the little plant had taken root. We were here for the long haul.

As James K. Baxter puts it

*Lord Holy Spirit
You are the sun who shines on the little plant,
You warm him gently, you give him life,
You raise him up to become a tree with many leaves.*

One of the constant companions on this journey has been Scripture. It has pointed us to the God in whom we believe, who has called us and who is our life and joy. Reflecting on the daily readings assigned by the Church has been our practice. They have been a source of guidance for us, a help to understanding, and a pathway for moving forward.

When we looked at the two Scripture readings for today we were amazed at how apt they are. The first reading is from Paul's first Letter to the Corinthians 1:26-31 and says

*Consider your own call, brothers and sisters:
not many of you were wise by human standards,
not many were powerful,
not many were of noble birth.
But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise;
God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.
God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not,
to reduce to nothing things that are,
so that no one might boast in the presence of God.
God is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom
from God.
As it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in God."*

This reading speaks clearly to us about our call and our coming to Wiri 30 years ago, our daring to do what seemed like then as such a 'risky' thing. We were naïve but we trusted in the providence of God, and now we can attest to the ever present hand of God 'guiding, wounding and healing us'. We had much to learn. Little did we know how much and where it would lead us. In the words of the poet

*Lord, Holy Spirit
You blow like the wind in a thousand paddocks,
Inside and outside the fences,
You blow where you wish to blow.*

Over the next years the Holy Spirit was certainly busy. So were we. With great energy and enthusiasm we became involved in so much. Gradually, we came to realise that our privileges meant others deprivation. And the words of Lila Watson began to take on a deeper meaning.

"If you have come to help me then you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine then let us work together."

Something that began in our early years here, a very simple activity which connects people and which still happens after 26 years, is the sharing of bread now two mornings a week. It was three until the beginning of this year. This distribution, catch-up and story-telling is a wonderful point of contact and interaction. There are mornings when I think I don't want to do this today, but out I go and always, always return feeling uplifted, enriched, and often humbled by the different encounters.

Women religious are called to witness, to be a voice and a presence, to stand with and alongside the poor and the whole of creation, and to be ever awake to changing times, both in the Church and Society. We have endeavoured through our ministry as Sisters of Mercy to be faithful to that call. Reading the signs of the times, taking stock and knowing when to review and evaluate has been an important hallmark over the decades. This reflecting with others, led to the establishment of the Wiri Centre in the year 2000 and the expansion of the Sisters of Mercy Wiri. At this stage we entered into a more developed and organised phase.

We especially acknowledge the past and present members of our Trust Board. Their faith and trust in us to be true to our vocation has enabled us, Sisters of Mercy Wiri to adapt to changing circumstances and influences. We are grateful to all the women and men who have given us so generously of their time and expertise to serve on our Board. Thank you especially to Carol Mollard, the first chair of the Board, and to Ruth Spelman, our current chair. In 2009, the decision to relinquish all funding and employment contracts and to leave the Wiri Centre to return to working from No.14, left us unencumbered and free as women religious to be open once again to possibilities and invitations.

In 2004, after reflecting with the faith community it became clear that the most life giving thing to do after 11 years of gathering and worshipping together in the Wiri Community Hall was to bring our little group to a close. Many members of the community moved on to join with neighbouring parishes. Thank you to all of you for the precious memories we have of those years.

We have 'never doubted the Spring', that season when new growth and life appears. We have believed that the God who called us to be here will not let us down. Our journey may have been as turbulent and surprising as spring can be, but we always know that Spring and the hope it brings would come. James K. Baxter again.

*Lord, Holy Spirit
You are the kind fire who does not cease to burn,
Consuming us with flames of love and peace,
Driving us out like sparks to set the world on fire.*

Well, yes – being golden oldies is no reason to lag. What we have now are the learnings and wisdom of the years. Frenetic activity gives way to more reflective practice and engagement.

Celebrating today, for us, is about acknowledging each one of you here, as well as those who were unable to come today. You have all had a part to play in the thirty years of our ministry in Wiri, the ups and the downs, the good times and the not so good, the summers and the winters of our time here, so to speak. We are celebrating with joy and gratitude the relationships, connections, interactions, friendships, exchanges and associations we have encountered over the years - the children and families in our neighbourhood, the local school community, business and community leaders, the parish and school community of St Anne's, government and non-government agencies, local and central government politicians all whom we have engaged with on so many different levels. Your example, encouragement, accompaniment and at times your humour and challenging words have been a source of strength in times of struggle, disappointment and doubt. We know we belong to a much wider group of committed people. It is a privilege to have worked with and continue to work alongside so many talented and dedicated people.

We recall with special fondness those who have been part of our thirty years and who have died; especially Rihi Taiapei, Maurice Wilson, Sr Juliana Henderson, Fred Anderson,

Yvonne Weggery, Gwen Naughton and Fr Terry Dibble, a much loved friend and mentor, who shared a love for the poor and who worked so tirelessly for justice for all. May they rest in peace.

We give a special thank you to our families, our parents, who gave us life, our faith, and a place of belonging, to our brothers and sisters, their spouses, and our extended families who have loved us and supported us at all times.

The heritage left to us by all our fore-sisters, Catherine McAuley and Cecilia Maher and all those who have gone before us is overwhelming. The inspiration they have given us cannot be measured. We are thankful, too, to the leadership of the Sisters of Mercy, who, over the years, have given us the practical assistance we needed to be here. Thank you, too, to those Sisters who have and continue to share our journey with us in so many different ways.

Finally, we acknowledge with love and gratitude our neighbours and the people of Wiri. Thank you so much for your love and kindness. We love being here and have learned so much from you. This is our hood our patch. Let us continue to work together and look after one another.

And have you noticed that it is Spring again? And now let us sing.

Anne Hurley

Margaret Martin

**“Do not be disheartened if,
when advocating the claims of the poor,
you receive the treatment of beggars . . .
followers of Christ
must share the fortunes of disciples.”**

Catherine McAuley