



Towards Mercy Ministry Companions

Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea | Edition Number 1 | November 2020

Welcome to *Towards* Mercy Ministry Companions, the occasional newsletter from the Institute's PJP Transition Group (Sister Elizabeth Moloney, Sister Margaret Endicott, David Penny, Nicki Patten, Jonathan Campton (Executive Officer) and Sister Caroline Ryan (Chair)).

The IPTG has been meeting every three weeks since February this year. Our broad role is to advance the movement towards the new ministerial Public Juridic Person (PJP) which will assume governance of the Institute's incorporated ministries. Preparing for the PJP is a multi-faceted process and some of the tasks are quite complex. However, it is certainly purposeful work and we are honoured to be entrusted with it on behalf of the Institute and its ministries. We are grateful too for the wise counsel of canonist, Sister Mary Wright IBVM, and the expert advice of Lucinda Smith of Thomson Geer Lawyers who regularly attend our meetings.

Name of PJP

The new PJP will be called Mercy Ministry Companions.

We hope that this theologically rich name will invite frequent, deep reflection by all involved with the PJP – those who govern it, the women and men who lead and staff its ministries, and the people whom the ministries serve.

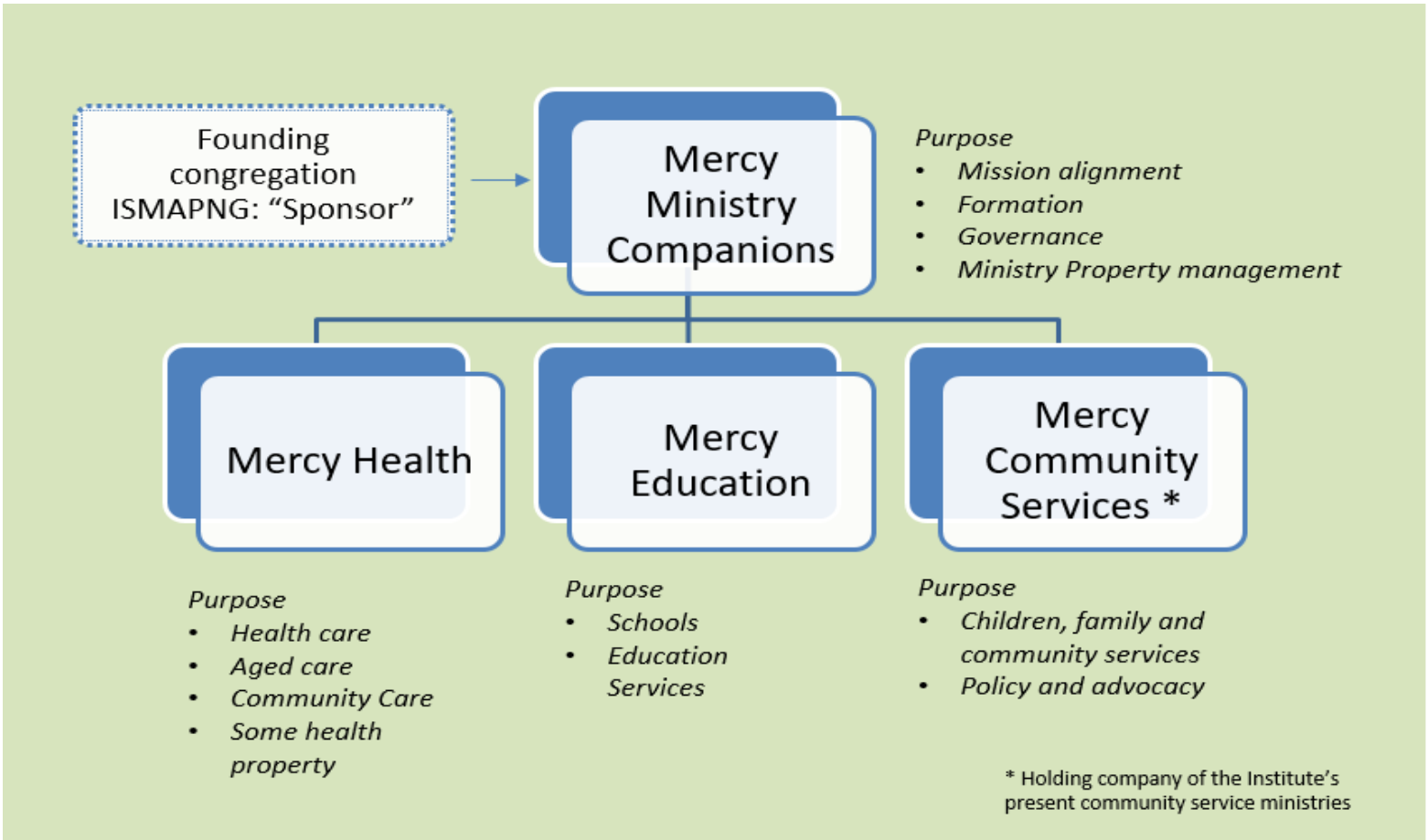
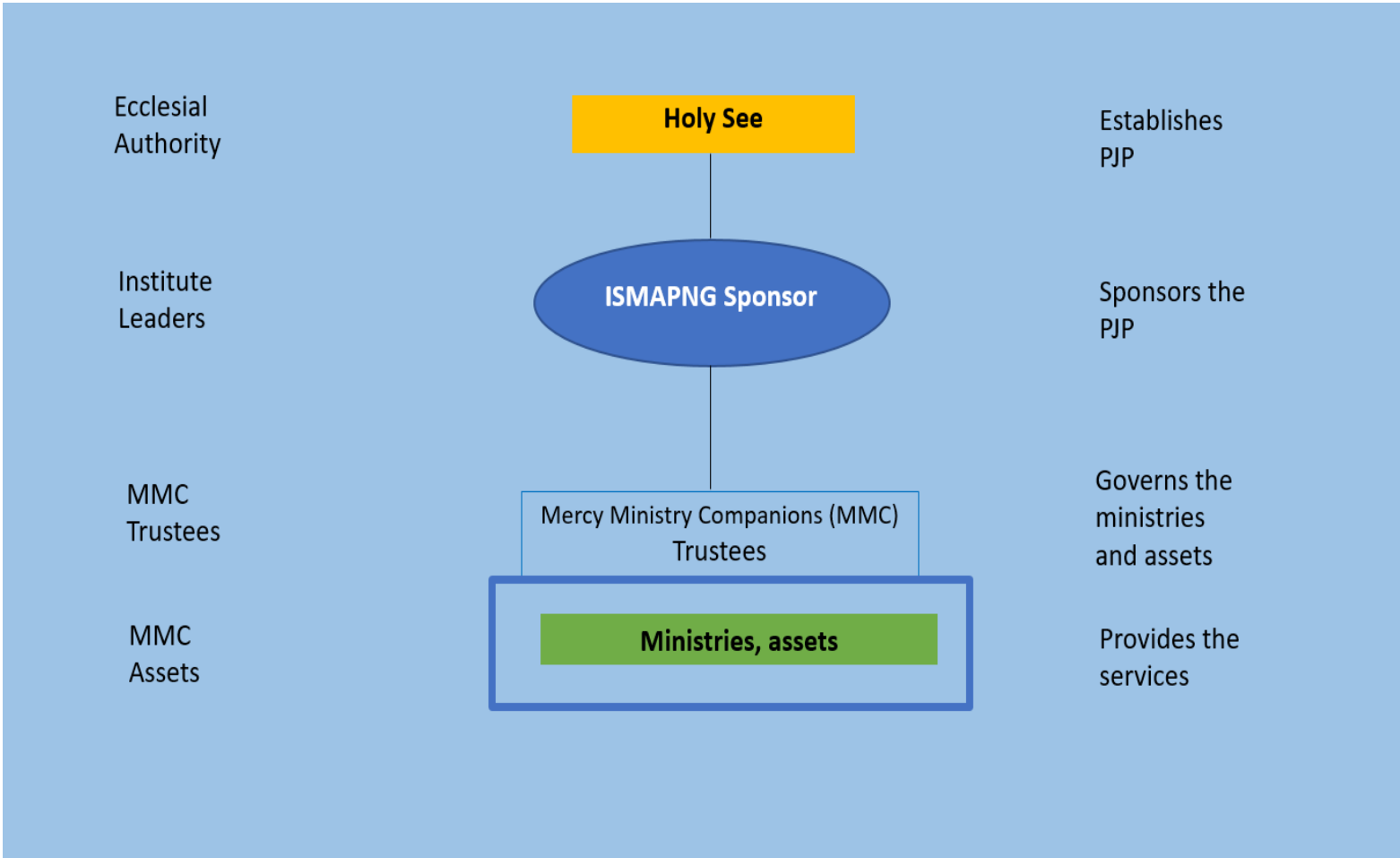
This first reflection is offered by Sister Veronica Lawson RSM

"Taking the five loaves and the two fish, Jesus looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before the people...and all ate and were satisfied"
(Mark 6:41-2).

Mercy Ministry Companions Ltd has been brought into being so that all who hunger and thirst for their share in God's bounty may "eat and be satisfied", literally and metaphorically. It brings together diverse ministries that serve God's mission of mercy, ministries grounded in the gospel, in the Catholic Christian tradition and in the vision of Venerable Catherine McAuley. It allows for the creation of new ministries that have the potential to bring life and healing to a broken world.

That all may eat and be filled with the means to sustain and to enhance life at every level lies at the heart of the mercy mission. It is the dream that sustains every ministry carried out in the name of God's mercy. To be designated "companions", that is those who break bread together, is to honour both the distinctive contribution of each ministry and the diversity that contributes to the realisation of God's reign and to the building up of the Body of Christ".





Trustee Directors

Mercy Ministry Companions will be governed by a Council of Trustee Directors. The Statutes provide for at least five and a maximum of nine Trustee Directors; initially it is intended to have seven.

Currently processes are underway, first, to identify potential Trustee Directors and then, to recommend by April 2021 seven individuals to the Institute Leader and Council for appointment when the Holy See establishes Mercy Ministry Companions.

It is well understood that the role of the Trustee Directors is pivotal to good governance and to promoting the ideals and values at the heart of the PJP. In that light, you may be interested to read the desired qualities both of individuals and the council as a whole, as endorsed by the IPTG.

Individual Trustee Directors

It is expected that women and men suitable for the role and responsibilities of Trustee Directors

- are personally committed to the ideals and values which Jesus Christ embodied and consistently demonstrated;
- uphold the teaching and law of the Catholic Church and desire to serve its mission;
- appreciate that each of the founding ministries of Mercy Ministry Companions has developed over many decades according to the tradition of Gospel service begun by Venerable Catherine McAuley;
- satisfy relevant legal requirements for the role of Trustee Director;
- have such a vision for the flourishing of Mercy Ministry Companions that each of its ministries will always be a faithful, contemporary agent of God's mercy;
- are willing and available to participate in regular opportunities for formation in the Ministry of Governance;
- can exercise authority and collegiality in ways that are life-affirming for all concerned;
- have professional experience and skills relevant to effective canonical stewardship of Mercy Ministry Companions;
- understand the structures of governance and related areas of accountability at all levels of Mercy Ministry Companions.

Council of Trustee Directors

It is expected that there will be 'a variety of gifts' contributing to the collective capacity of the Council of Trustee Directors so that at all times it is characterised by

- commitment to governing Mercy Ministry Companions with confidence and conviction according to Catholic principles and inspiring their dynamic tradition of service begun by Catherine McAuley in the name of God's mercy;
- competence to
 - *understand and exercise its role and responsibilities both as a canonical body and a civil body,
 - *act in accordance with the Statutes of Mercy Ministry Companions,
 - *interact, at an appropriate level, with Mercy Ministry Companions insofar as it is a complex business organisation with particular church and civil accountabilities,
 - *make judicious appointments of directors to the boards of Mercy Health and Aged care Limited, Mercy Education Limited, Mercy Community Services Limited,
 - *advise or direct, as appropriate, on matters of finance, property and other assets held by Mercy Ministry Companions;
- equitable representation of women and men;
- equitable representation across dioceses.

Mercy PJP Alliance Committee

Recently a committee has been formed to explore the potential of an alliance among the three Mercy PJPs in Australia - **MercyCare** in Western Australia, **Mercy Partners** in Queensland, the Institute's new PJP, **Mercy Ministry Companions**, and the proposed PJP of the Sisters of Mercy, New Zealand, **Whanau Mercy Ministries** (Whanau' is a Maori word which has lovely connotations of family, belonging, and mutuality).

The work of the Alliance Committee is obviously preliminary but among its members there is real enthusiasm for something like an Oceania Alliance of autonomous Mercy PJPs which could promote a true spirit of mutuality and enable collaboration in various ways for the sake of our one Mercy mission. At this early stage the thinking is that such collaboration could include sharing of 'formation for governance' programmes, facilitating professional relationships among PJP governors as well as personnel from like ministries, developing a common initiative for identifying potential Trustee Directors, speaking 'with one voice' on particular ethical subjects, assisting each other in understanding and responding to government policies, industrial issues and relevant church teachings and statements, and celebrating together their unifying Mercy heritage.