

Charism in the Service of Mission

Charism is a gift given to an individual to serve God's mission in their time and place and it can never remain in that time. Charism, as a Spirit led and Gospel grounded phenomenon, is dynamic and eternally evolving. Hence, the task of preserving and nurturing a charism must go hand in hand with ongoing renewal and reimagining where the Spirit is leading Mercy, Presentation and Franciscan ministries today.

Consider the following observations regarding reimagining charism for the contemporary context:

We must live our faith and exercise leadership in a way that is based on authentic discernment of the tradition and is attuned to the contemporary context ... leaders must continue to discern the direction of the Spirit through openness to Scripture, the signs of the times, and the belief in the action of God in the world today ... In the midst of this, our challenge is to bring creativity to bear, while risking the vulnerability which comes from being open to the new (Richard Lennan. Leaders in the Religious Domain, Leading in Catholic Schools. NCEC Conference Paper. 2005).

What vulnerabilities come from being open to new ways of living and leading the Mercy, Presentation or Franciscan ministries' charism?

What was received as gift by Catherine [McAuley, Nano Nagle and Elizabeth Hayes] and her first companions and expressed through their experience and in their shaping vision, has been transmitted through story, through the original rule, through writings, through living traditions held in the community memory. The original gift has been refined and developed and expressed in a variety of ways as it has passed through different hands in different times and in different cultures. That is the fascinating part of the charism as we see it through history. We can see it as a live and dynamic and growing power, we can recognise its distinctiveness; we can relate it so clearly to its origins in Catherine [McAuley, Nano Nagle and Elizabeth Hayes]; we can see it in the stamp of the Holy Spirit ... (Marie Gaudry rsm. 1999. With Catherine My Spirit Mother. Sisters of Mercy Parramatta. 102).



If you would like to read more about ways in which you can celebrate and reimagine the founding charisms of your ministry, please consider our new resources:

1. Keep the Lantern Burning – Preserving, Nurturing, Reimagining the Presentation Charism.
2. Be as Shining Lamps – Preserving, Nurturing, Reimagining the Mercy Charism.

These resource books offer suggestions, reflections and leadership team exercises, plus so much more.

N.B. The Franciscan book will be available in 2023.

REFLECTION

How are you called to reimagine charism in your ministry?

We acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners of the lands on which our ministries exist and the Elders both past and present on whose land we walk, work and live. We support the Uluru Statement from the Heart.