

Formation with Mercy Partners



We acknowledge and pay our respects to
the traditional owners;
the Yuggera and Turrabal people;
on whose land we meet on today.

We recognised the continued deep spiritual
attachment and relationship of
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
to this country and commit ourselves
to the ongoing journey of reconciliation.



Dr Ricki Jeffrey
Board Chair
Mercy Partners



Ms Catherine Bartolo
Chair
Formation Subcommittee
Mercy Partners



Ms Kate Garrone
Director of Formation
Mercy Partners

Welcome

Mercy Partners is delighted to share our Formation for Mission framework and principles and to launch this comprehensive suite of Formation sessions, specifically designed for the Directors of our ministry boards.

At the heart of everything we do is the Mercy Partners mission: "to contribute to the emergence of a world where the healing, liberating and life-giving mercy of God is experienced". To truly bring this mission to life, we require governance that is deeply mission-driven and founded on a clear sense of partnership.

Mercy Partners is a dynamic, multi-charism, multi-ministry Public Juridic Person (PJP). Our very name reflects the "mercy of God at work in partnerships", emphasising that our relationships rely on the "formative value of friendship and collective vision" and thus our formation for mission framework is designed to honour, nurture, and reimagine our role in the Catholic church and the unique charisms of our ministries through six key domains, including Mission, Spirituality, and Leadership and Governance.

The Catholic Identity sessions introduced here—ranging from exploring the Mercy of God to practical Discernment and Catholic Social Teaching—are designed to be relevant, engaging, and supportive of your vital work. These sessions invite you to move toward a spiritual "way of proceeding," exploring what it means to lead "in the way of Jesus".

Whether we are addressing "Mission Drift" or "Widening the Tent," these workshops provide a space to pause, realign, and ensure our governance remains a tangible expression of justice and peace. We invite you to engage with these opportunities with good will and a spirit of communal reflection. Together, we can ensure our leadership remains an act of "leading culture" and "washing feet," keeping our ministries firmly rooted in living out gospel values.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to our ministry boards. We look forward to our shared work together.

Ricki Jeffery, Cath Bartolo and Kate Garrone

A Theological Framework for the Mission

- Part 1 (extract)

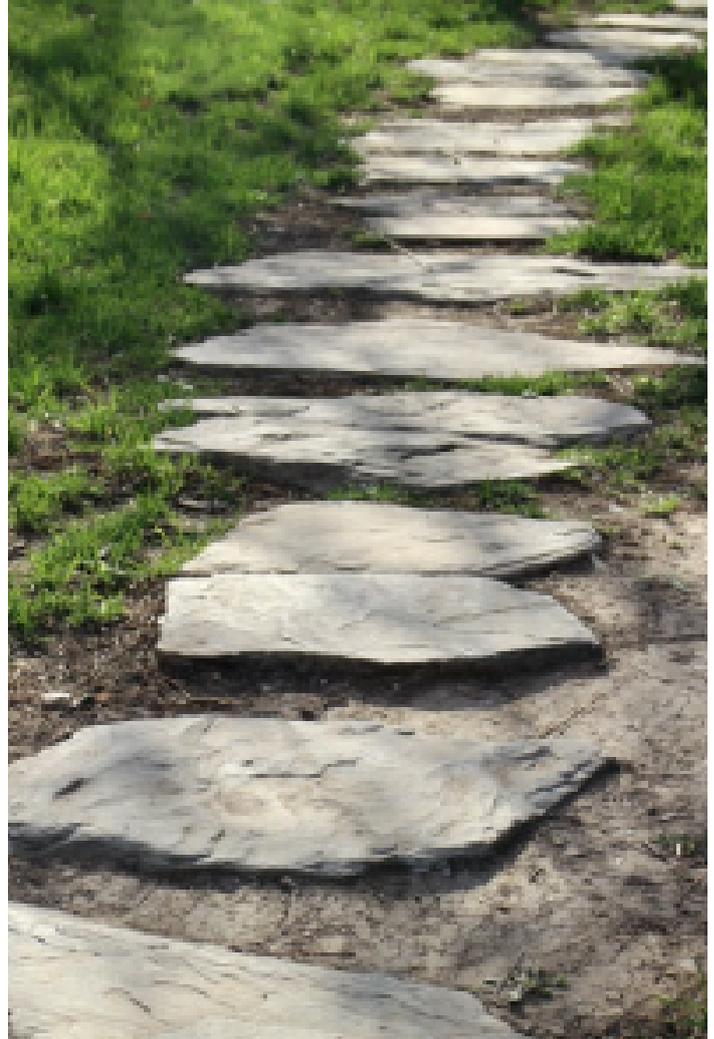
Mercy Partners aims in all of its activities to contribute to the emergence of a world where the healing, liberating, and life-giving mercy of God is experienced.

This statement of mission expresses a deep, binding value. Members of Mercy Partners discern their way forward in diverse ministries according to their shared desire for people to know the experience of God's Mercy. And because they are partners, their relationships rely more on the formative value or friendship and collective vision than on inflexible institutional structure.

The building of partnerships cultivates a diversity of gifts and charisms, embracing lay leadership, and creatively responds to the changing needs of many ministries. Mercy Partners stands within the Church's long history of communicating mercy in the world. Since the early days of the Church, Christians have gathered in communities of different kinds, expressing their faith in liturgy and sacrament, in friendship and service, whether in households, hospitals, prisons, schools, or church buildings...

Each Catholic community and organisation hands on (tradere/tradition) a Eucharistic way of seeing that animates its distinctive mission, activities, and place in the world.

Mercy Partners Theological Framework, Part 1, page 3, 2016.
Dr. Christiann Jacobs-Vandegeer



Definition of Formation

Formation is a transformative process. It helps cultivate a contemporary mission ethos that responds to the signs of the times and supports effective leadership. Rooted in faith and guided by the Holy Spirit, Formation involves theological reflection, dialogue, and discernment.

Expressed within a communal context, Mercy Partners Ministry Directors' Formation is a faith-based journey, grounded in Scripture, Catholic tradition, and charisms of our ministries. It fosters stewardship of the Mercy Partners mission by nurturing each individual's spirituality, while also forming a common spirituality, unique to Mercy Partners – one that contributes *to a world where the healing, liberating, and life-giving mercy of God is experienced.*

Domains within Mercy Partners Formation Framework for Ministry Directors



MISSION

Understanding of and alignment of the mission of Mercy Partners, and your Ministry, with a personal expression of mission.

SPIRITUALITY AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Engaging in personal and communal prayer, discernment using synodal processes, and theological reflection.

CATHOLIC THOUGHT AND CONTEXT

Understanding of scripture, Canonical Law, Catholic doctrine, practice, and Catholic Social Teaching within relevant contexts.

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Demonstrating competency in leadership and governance roles.

MINISTRY CONTEXT

Maintaining knowledge and experience of Mercy Partners ministry context.

HUMAN RELATIONS

Respecting the dignity and diversity of all people and stakeholders.

Domain Elements

The domain elements outline the values, knowledge, and competencies for Directors.

Domain 1: Mission

Each Director:

- Articulates the mission and values of the Ministry.
- Understands the charism and heritage of the Ministry.
- Understands the mission and values of Mercy Partners.

Domain 2: Spirituality and Theological Reflection

Each Director:

- Values spirituality and the regular practice of individual and communal prayer.
- Shares their spirituality with other Directors and supports the development of a shared spirituality.
- Understands synodal processes as a way of working together and listening.
- Applies discernment processes in personal, professional, and organisational life.
- Appreciates the centrality of 'relationship' in Christian theology - with God, self, others, and creation.

Domain 3: Catholic Thought and Context

Each Director:

- Understands Church law, canonical responsibilities and Church governance structures.
- Understands and engages with scripture, theology in particular ecclesiology, missiology, and Catholic Social Teaching.
- Applies discernment processes in personal, professional, and organisational life.
- Appreciates the centrality of Christ.

Domain 4: Leadership and Governance

Each Director:

- Articulates an understanding of faith leadership grounded in contemporary theory and good practice.
- Recognises the role of leaders in shaping organisational cultures appropriate to the Ministry.
- Demonstrates an understanding of governance processes for ethical decision - making in a Catholic organisation, including strategic planning, risk management, and financial stewardship.
- Demonstrates corporate governance knowledge and capability aligned with a mission lens and understands the distinct roles of ministry Board Directors and CEOs/Principals.

Domain 5: Ministry Context

Each Director:

- Demonstrates knowledge and experience relevant to the context of your Ministry.

Domain 6: Human Relations

Each Director:

- Demonstrates a commitment to human dignity, especially in relationship to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.
- Recognises First Nations' People and is committed to reconciliation and action for justice.
- Demonstrates the importance of stakeholder relations and establishing relationships that nurture *communio*.¹

¹*Communio* refers to the idea of communion, fellowship, or mutual sharing.

Catholic Identity Sessions

Workshop 1: Partners in Mission

– Rooted in God's Mercy, Acting in Communion

Domain 1: Mission

What does it mean to be partners in mission? This foundational session invites Board Directors to re-member — to reconnect with — the special charism heard at the founding of Mercy Partners as a Public Juridic Person.

We begin where all mission begins: with God who is Love, Mercy, and Goodness. From this divine source flows Jesus' example, our personal sense of purpose, our ministry's mission, and Mercy Partners collective calling. Mission is not a corporate slogan — it is a response to Love that shapes how we live, lead, and serve.

Through interactive exploration of the Mercy Partners founding story and mission statements, and that of our own ministry, Directors will uncover what resonates, what surprises, and what calls them forward. The session unpacks 'mission' as more than strategy — it is communion, relationship, and interconnectedness lived out in governance.

Workshop 2: Mercy of God

Domain 1: Mission

What does it mean to carry the Mercy of God into a world that increasingly experiences mercilessness? This retreat-style Formation session invites Board Directors into contemplative encounter with mercy — not as an abstract concept, but as lived experience.

The Mercy Partners Mission Statement declares that we aim "to contribute to the emergence of a world where the healing, liberating and life-giving Mercy of God is experienced." This is not merely aspirational language — it is an urgent imperative for our time.

Through scripture, poetry, and personal reflection, Directors will explore the rich biblical understanding of mercy as compassion — God's own heart moved by human suffering. We will dispel common misconceptions that mercy is weak or implies "power over," discovering instead that mercy is the posture of equals who recognise their shared frailty and vulnerability.

The session moves toward practical application: Where are the edges in need of mercy in your ministry? How do we practice mercy daily — in our boardrooms, in our relationships, in our decisions?

Workshop 3: Mission Drift

— Staying True to the Call

Domain 1: Mission

Every ministry inspired by mercy begins from the same source — God's enduring mercy expressed through Jesus and embodied in our response to the needs of the world. Yet, over time, organisations can lose focus. Mission Drift happens not through malice but momentum — when good work, strategic priorities, or external pressures pull us subtly away from the founding spirit.

This workshop invites Board Directors to pause and realign. Rooted in scripture and your ministry's charism, directors explore the difference between mission drift, mission agility, and mission stagnation. Through reflective dialogue, practical discernment frameworks, and shared stories from Church tradition, participants identify how governance decisions can remain faithful while adapting to changing contexts.

Workshop 4: Take Us to the Edge

— Widening the Tent

Domain 2: Spirituality and Theological Reflection

Domain 4: Leadership and Governance

Take Us to the Edge is an invitation to be courageous. It challenges boards and ministries to notice who stands at the margins of our mission — the people, stories, or ideas waiting to be heard. Every generation of the Church must widen its tent, discerning how to remain faithful to the Gospel while responding to new needs.

This session explores the prophetic dimension of Mercy Partners leadership. Participants will reflect on scripture — and examine what it means for governance to operate not only at the centre but at the edge, where vulnerability, encounter, and transformation happen. Together, you will identify where your board is being called to the edge and commit to practical steps that bring those on the margins into the ministry's life and decision making.

Workshop 5: Leading in the Way of Jesus

Domain 2: Spirituality and Theological Reflection

Domain 4: Leadership and Governance

What does it mean to lead not just with professional excellence, but "in the way of Jesus"? This workshop invites Board Directors to move beyond secular models of governance to explore Christology in the boardroom. We grapple with the provocative question: How might Jesus take on the role of Board Director?

By reflecting on the leadership traits of Jesus—his prayer, friendship, service, and courage—Directors will explore how they are called to be the "hands and feet of Jesus" in their specific ministry context. Through scripture exploration and practical case studies, we will examine how Jesus responded to "tough times" and how that informs a Board's response to contemporary challenges. This is an invitation to spiritual leadership, where governance becomes an act of "leading culture" and "washing feet," ensuring the ministry remains rooted in its divine calling.

Workshop 6: Leading with Leo

- Leadership in a Fragile Church

Domain 3: Catholic Thought and Context

Domain 4: Leadership and Governance

Leading with Leo explores what it means to lead in the Church today – a Church that is fragile yet faithful; broken yet called. Inspired by the humble words of Pope Leo and the continuing spirit of Pope Francis, this session invites Board Directors to reflect on their own leadership within the mission of Mercy Partners.

Using Leo's choice of name and his themes of dialogue, peace and co-responsibility, participants will consider what it means to exercise authority as service and to lead with both courage and humility. The session draws on St Peter's experience as founder of the Church to affirm that leadership in the Church is never about perfection, but faithfulness in relationship with Christ. Guided reflection, small group discussion will help us examine how the values of synodality, integral ecology and accountable governance shape decision-making today, and our board leading with compassionate clarity and hope.

Workshop 7: Discernment

- How do we come to know?

Domain 2: Spirituality and Theological Reflection

Domain 4: Leadership and Governance

To govern and lead effectively, Board Directors must move beyond mere analytical data to "knowing well" and pursuing right understanding. This workshop invites Directors to engage with discernment, shifting from a linear "problem-solving" mindset to a spiritual "way of proceeding".

We will explore the rich tradition of discernment within our Christian tradition to examine how Jesus acted as a "Disrupter" to break dualistic thinking in favour of mercy. We will also consider the contribution discernment processes can make to our decision-making processes and plan together how we can implement this wisdom in our way of proceeding together as a board.

Workshop 8: Listen

Domain 2: Spirituality and Theological Reflection

Domain 4: Leadership and Governance

Domain 6: Human Relations

What does it mean to truly listen with the "ear of the heart" in the context of board governance? This session invites Board Directors to move beyond mere strategy and enter into synodality—the practice of listening together.

Drawing on the Mercy Partners Theological Framework, we explore how lay leaders are called to creatively respond to the world's need for mercy by reading the "signs of the times". By reflecting on the specific charism of their ministry and the broader Mercy Partners mission, Directors will experience a "Conversation in the Spirit". This process is not just a tool for engagement; it is a way of being community that creates a "silence into which another may speak," allowing the gentle voice of God to guide the board's discernment on current, complex issues.

Workshop 9:

Everybody's Business: Catholic Social Teaching

Domain 3: Catholic Thought and Context

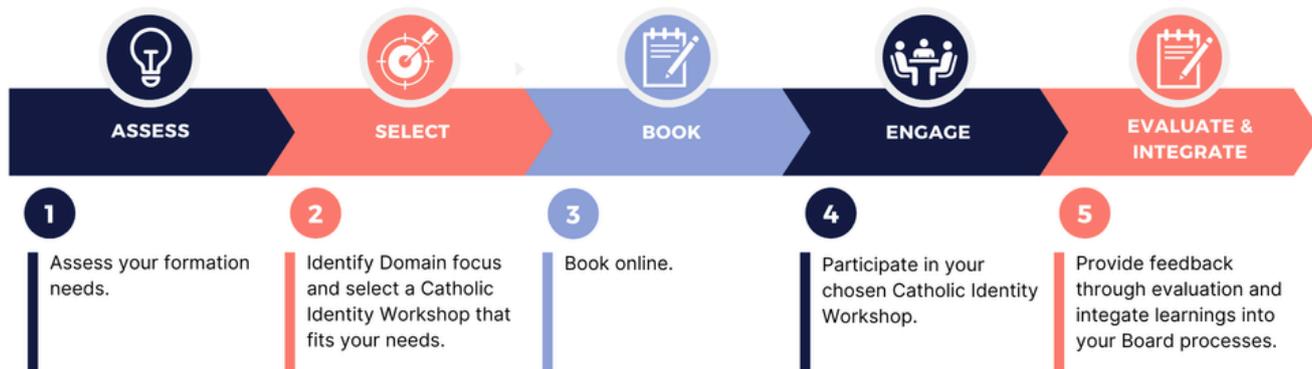
Domain 6: Human Relations

Board Directors are invited to "Everybody's Business," an interactive workshop designed to explore Catholic Social Teaching (CST) as the essential moral compass for effective governance. Often called the Church's "best-kept secret," CST provides a robust framework of principles for reflection, criteria for judgment, and directives for action that move governance beyond technical compliance toward servant leadership.

Through the lens of integral human development, we will examine how core pillars—such as human dignity, subsidiarity, and the common good—inform high-level decision-making. This session challenges boards to adopt a "culture of encounter," ensuring that strategic plans and financial oversight are grounded in a preferential option for the poor and a commitment to our common home.

Using a method of discernment, Directors will engage with real-world governance scenarios to see how a wisdom approach to learning can transform the board table into a place of Eucharistic living. Join us to discover how these timeless themes can help Mercy Partners foster a "civilisation of love," ensuring our mission remains a tangible expression of justice and peace in a rapidly changing world.

Catholic Identity Session Booking Process



	Mission	Spirituality	Catholic Thought	Leadership	Ministry Context	Human Relations
1. Partners in Mission	●					
2. Mercy of God	●					
3. Mission Drift	●					
4. Take us to the Edge		●		●		
5. Leading in the way of Jesus		●		●		
6. Leading with Leo			●	●		
7. Discernment		●		●		
8. Listen		●		●		●
9. Everybody's Business			●			●

For online access to book your Catholic Identity Sessions, please click the link below:

[Welcome to Formation with Mercy Partners - Mercy Partners](#)

Mercy Partners Formation Consultants



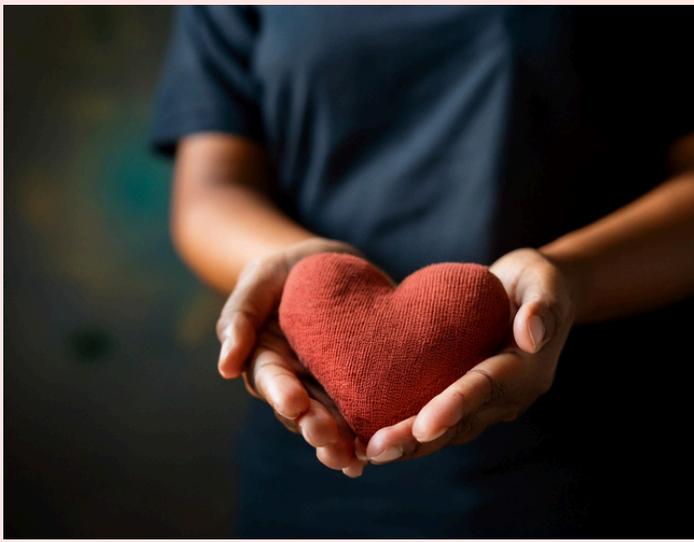
Ms Christine Clarke
Mercy Partners Formation Consultant



Mrs Jenni Hickson
Mercy Partners Formation Consultant



Dr Lisa McDonald
Mercy Partners Formation Consultant



Compassion

Those who show compassion,
demonstrate compassion
for self and others.

By showing compassion,
they acknowledge God's presence
in all people and honour the dignity
of all of God's creation.



Justice

Those who show justice,
live and promote right relationships with
God, self, neighbour and creation.

By upholding human rights,
they accept their responsibilities
to one another and strive to provide
fair access to the world's resources
for all people.



Respect

Those who show respect,
honour the integrity and
diversity of creation.

By respecting the unique dignity
of every human person,
they recognise and see in all people
and in the created world
the image and likeness of God.



Hope

Those who show hope,
live the resurrection story by trusting
in the transforming power of God.

By cultivating authenticity,
a resilient spirit and a focus
on gratitude and reflection,
they preserve through difficulties,
act with integrity, and serve with joy.

*The Mission of
Mercy Partners
is to contribute to
the emergence of a world
where the healing,
liberating and life-giving
mercy of God
is experienced.*





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