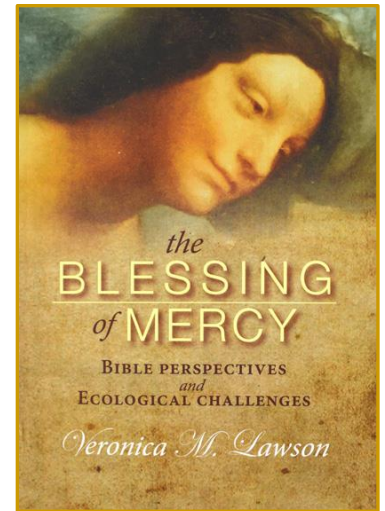


THE BLESSING OF MERCY

On Friday, October 9, Sisters of Mercy from near and far, colleagues and former students from Australian Catholic University and St Martin's in the Pines (now Damascus College Ballarat), Mercy Associates, family and friends gathered in Ballarat for the launch of **'The Blessing of Mercy – Bible Perspectives & Ecological Challenges'** by well-known biblical scholar, educator and theologian Veronica Lawson rsm.

In front of an appreciative audience in the Gathering Room of the South B Community Institute offices, 'The Blessing of Mercy' was launched by Berenice Kerr rsm (South B Community Leader) and Elaine Wainwright rsm. Karon Donnellon rsm was the MC for the occasion.



Berenice began her address with the prayer of Pope Francis for the church: *Let the church, he prays, always be a place of mercy and hope where everyone is welcomed, loved and forgiven.* She went on to say that if the church (meaning us all) is seeking a blue print for welcome, love and forgiveness, we need go no further than this little book – the Blessing of Mercy.



Berenice shared some of the riches found in the book which are to be explored by us all and pointed out that of particular value is the fact that underlying Veronica's interpretation of biblical perspectives of Mercy is a clearly reasoned discourse on ecological themes and a social commentary as well. She said, "This book is gift! It is not simply an academic exploration of mercy – though the academic quality goes without saying. No, the character of this work is on quite a different plane. This book is the gift of Veronica's self to the earth community. It represents all she stands for – her mercy spirituality, her inspiration, her soul, really. This is actually Veronica Lawson laid-bare – made vulnerable – I am reminded of Yeats's poem 'Cloths of Heaven'. Veronica has expressed in this book her dreams for the earth community. She has spread those dreams under our feet. I urge all of you to tread softly for we tread on her dreams."

Berenice concluded her address with these words: "Congratulations Veronica. Thank you for making your scholarship, your wisdom and your interpretation of mercy available to us all. We are delighted with you and for you. And we are proud of you. Let me conclude with another quotation from Pope Francis who said: *A little bit of mercy makes the world less cold and more just* – believe me, there's more than 'a little bit of mercy' in these pages. So in launching it I say – 'Go forth little book. Take the blessing of mercy to our earth community and do your work in inspiring us all to act with compassion and justice'".

Sister Elaine Wainwright, herself a scripture scholar of note, spoke further to the rich resource that the book gives us to enter into the 'multi-faceted mercy of God'. "It is, she said, a book for pondering and savouring". Elaine also announced that the book will be a valuable resource for the Mercy International Reflection Process that will take place during the Jubilee Year of Mercy.



Following Berenice and Elaine, Veronica spoke in response, acknowledging all who have been part of the journey that brought about the book and of her hopes for its use. She was delighted to have so many with her for the occasion, particularly her family.

At the conclusion of the formalities, Hugh McGinlay of Morning Star Publishing said a few words and announced that the book would be published in the United States in the very near future. Following the launch light refreshments were shared by all and many 'little books' were signed and purchased.



Photos:

Top: L-R Berenice Kerr rsm, Veronica, Elaine Wainwright rsm

Middle: L-R John Healy (Book designer), Veronica, Hugh McGinlay

Bottom: L-R Bishop Peter Connors, Karon Donnellon rsm, Faith Jones rsm.

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