

Sisters of Mercy Symbols

Te Ngakau Atawhai Heart of Mercy



When the Sisters of Mercy throughout Aotearoa, including Tonga and Samoa, joined together to become one congregation in 2005, each Sister received a little Heart of Mercy pendant.

If you look carefully at the photo of the sculpture, you will notice the two koru form a heart shape.

The koru, fern fronds, reach towards the light as they unfurl. In this sculpture, the koru symbolises the renewing power of new life.

This is a special Mercy symbol for our New Zealand Sisters of Mercy.

Catherine McAuley and the Mercy Cross



Catherine McAuley designed the original Mercy Cross herself -a dark background with a white cross in the middle.

The Mercy Cross that we see today still has a white cross in the middle of a dark coloured cross. Catherine chose the cross to be the symbol of the Sisters of Mercy because of her deep love for the crucified Jesus.

You may have noticed that the Cross does not actually have the crucified Jesus on the Cross. This is because Catherine believed that each Sister of Mercy places herself on the Cross to be like Jesus. Sisters of Mercy all around the world wear this cross so we can recognise who they are.

Catherine's Shawl



In 1852, Catherine was helping a poor woman who was very sick with cholera. The woman died, leaving a new born baby all alone. Catherine wrapped the baby in her black woollen shawl and took her home with her. Catherine soon found someone to take care of the baby.

The black shawl is a symbol of giving protection and shelter to those in need.

Boots



The Sisters of Mercy were known as the 'walking nuns'.

They were the first nuns to leave their convent and go to help people in need in their homes, in hospital, and in prison.

The boots are a symbol of the work Sisters of Mercy do in our communities.

Good Cup of Tea



Catherine McAuley believed that welcoming people who needed help and offering them something to eat or drink was a way to share God's love.

Just before Catherine died, she asked that her Sisters have a 'good cup of tea' together after she had died so they could comfort each other.

The cup of tea is a symbol of the Mercy value of hospitality.