



## CAUSE OF VENERABLE MARY AIKENHEAD

NEWSLETTER NO 26  
MARCH 2025

**In the Perfect Will of God: Roots of Hope and Flowers of Faith**  
*(Dublin, Wednesday, February 16, 1842)*

**"May all we undertake be for the Divine Honour and only in perfect submission to His most holy Will, for whom we live, act, and labour."**

The above is the title and the saying of Venerable Mary Aikenhead used in the second story in our series on HOPE. This story and the first one published in January are on our webpage: [www.rsc Caritas.com](http://www.rsc Caritas.com)

The stories are linked to our Holy Father, Pope Francis' Jubilee Year of HOPE and show Venerable Mary Aikenhead's unwavering hope in her God, whom she lovingly refers to as 'Divine Providence'. Do take a few minutes to read the story and feel free to send your feedback to this email address [rsccause@rsc Caritas.com](mailto:rsccause@rsc Caritas.com)



On the next page, read Theresa's story of her experience in the Heritage Centre



My name is Theresa Whelan, and I came to work as

### Co-Coordinator at the Heritage Centre

on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024, hoping I could do justice to the legacy of Mary Aikenhead, and take care of the educational and cultural site which was established in her honor.

Having carried out many tours by now, I have come to realise that not only is this beautiful building and the artefacts contained inside one of Dublin's best kept secrets, it is the story of Mary Aikenhead herself, her vision, and devotion to caring for the poor and sick that is the true secret which society appears to have forgotten.

None of the visitors in recent months has known just **HOW** the hospital and the Religious Sisters of Charity congregation was established; the history of 56 St Stephen's Green, over the years; nor the life story of the Foundress herself, and it has been a pleasure and a resounding joy to re-introduce this story to the people who come here.

I love seeing their reaction when they complete the audio-visual story. There have been tears at the final scene. When we move into the private rooms, there is always a gasp of surprise when they see the Bath chair, and personal items. There is a reverence when we talk about the Prison Ships going to Australia, and the braveness of the Five Sisters who went there in 1838. The visits to Kilmainham Gaol also give a surprise to people.

The part of the tour that I love most is when we walk into the second room, with the desk and red chair. I feel that Mary Aikenhead really comes alive to people here. When we talk about the letters written, the Famine, and how she gave employment to local families, and how the men of those families carried Mary's coffin to Donnybrook Church and the graveyard afterwards as a mark of respect, that is a moment that everyone understands. Usually at least one person asks to bless themselves with the crucifix that sits on Mary's bed.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> January just gone, whilst we were open to the members of the Religious Sisters of Charity to come and spend time in Mary's rooms, we also had the pleasure of hosting the Ballsbridge Historical Society. They had asked if they could come in over a weekend. This was the perfect opportunity to welcome a large group and for myself, to gauge the interest in Sunday opening.

The afternoon was a resounding success as the visitors stayed almost 4 hours, watched every story on the screens, and spent time in the Quiet Room. I was worried we might run out of tea and biscuits. It was wonderful to listen to the reminiscences of other people's tales of St Vincent's, Lakelands School, Foxford rugs, and I loved the realisation and sense of acknowledgement as people left, that here is an historic place to visit, to enjoy the many aspects that are offered. We are slowly building a reconnection with Dublin and her people.

I took a call the other day from a member of a social group in Dundrum, who had heard about the Heritage Centre at a game of Bridge recently. So we have another 20 or so visitors coming in next week; along with school tours; the Gardaí in March; a weekly Volunteer drive; Transition Year Students, and community groups. All are spreading the word through conversations with friends and colleagues.

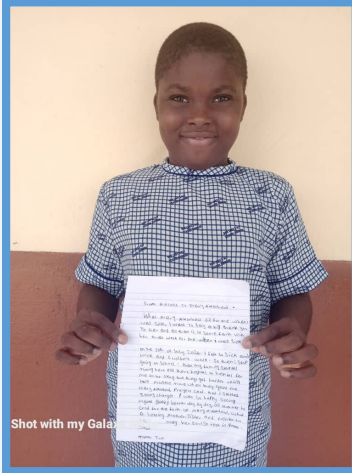
I am looking forward to walking the Mary Aikenhead Trail through the streets of Dublin, and in the very near future, hosting a monthly Prayer Group here at the centre.

Mary Aikenhead and her legacy have brought serenity and peace to my world.

# STORIES OF GRACES AND FAVOURS RECEIVED FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

## NIGERIA

Sr Elizabeth Udofia sent the following lovely story of a child being restored to health through the intercession of Venerable Mary Aikenhead:



Rejoice, a vibrant pupil of Our Lady's Nursery and Primary School, Bomadi, was in primary three when her life took an unexpected turn. One morning, she woke up to find herself unable to walk. Her body trembled uncontrollably, a condition known to be caused by debilitating illness that damages tissues and nerves.

Her worried parents rushed her to the hospital, but despite their best efforts her condition did not improve. Turning to prayer houses in desperation, they only saw her health worsen. Rejoice could no longer attend school, missing an entire term.

Throughout this ordeal, the school community stood by her. Her head teacher, class teacher and I visited her at different times,

offering prayer and encouragement to her and her family. Yet Rejoice's behaviour added to the family's challenges. She made frequent demands without regard for their financial struggles and often refused to take her medication.

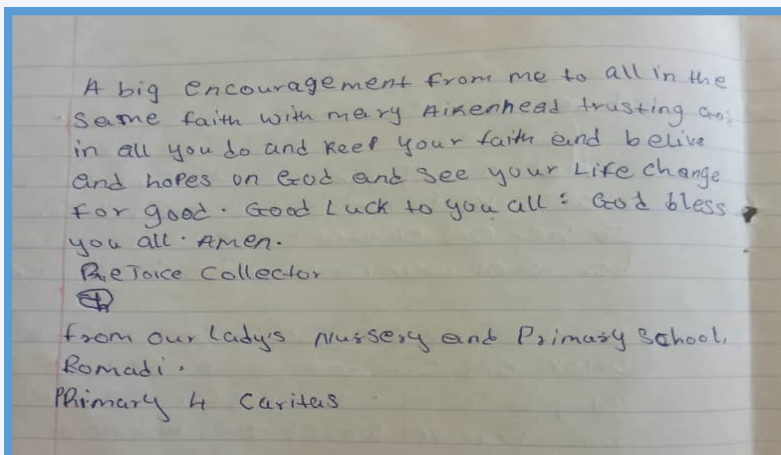
One day, I witnessed a heartbreaking scene. Rejoice's mother, overwhelmed by frustration and despair, beat her as she cried out in anger, "I will kill this child!". The commotion drew a crowd, and I stepped in to calm the situation. But the sadness of that day stayed with me.

In my desolation, my thoughts turned to the relic of Venerable Mary Aikenhead that I kept in my prayer book. It was my only relic, but the inner voice urged me to give it to Rejoice's family. Perhaps I thought this could be the miracle that our congregation needs for beatification and canonisation of Mary Aikenhead.

I visited Rejoice's home and shared my hopes with her mother and sister. Together we prayed and I instructed them to pray the Novena prayer to Venerable Mary Aikenhead every day that was written on the back of the relic card and to place the relic under her pillow trusting God's healing power through the intercession of Venerable Mary Aikenhead.

As I write this story, Rejoice has returned to the school, her health restored. We give all glory to God, who, through the intercession of Venerable Mary Aikenhead, brought healing and renewed hope to Rejoice and her family.

Rejoice wrote her own prayer below.



with all sincerity it is the wish of my heart to do all in our power to assist his good work in establishing useful Schools.

Ven Mary Aikenhead 2/3/1842

## NEWS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

**NIGERIA** Sr Agatha Onye reports on the celebrations of Mary Aikenhead's birthday 19th January.

### PRISON MINISTRY



The Sisters in St Joseph's community Kirikiri visited the prisoners at the three Correctional Centres in Kirikiri.

They shared 325 packages of garri and sugar for the inmates.

Sr Edidiong during communion service at the prisons talked to the inmates about Ven Mary Aikenhead and the congregation.

The Sisters in ABBI had a very big picture of Venerable Mary Aikenhead displayed in the church and they gave a brief history of the early years of Mary Aikenhead, her conversion, and the foundation of the Congregation with the help of Archbishop Daniel Murray.

All the communities in the Region actively participated in the celebrations with a Holy hour, prayer before the Blessed Sacrament and private prayer.



Many of the parishioners joined the sisters for the celebrations.

## NEWS FROM MALAWI, KONZALENDO — a time of great rejoicing.



In January 2025, The Sisters of Charity working in Konzalendo, Malawi welcomed home Sr Judith James Supedi, a native of Malawi and the first Malawian Sister to join the Sisters of Charity. Sr Judith was professed in January in Zambia and travelled home to Malawi where a Mass of thanksgiving was celebrated with her family members, Sisters of Charity, parishioners and many friends of Mary Aikenhead. The Friends organised the lovely celebration meal afterwards. There were many speeches, much singing and dancing and great rejoicing that the parish now had "a daughter" who was a Sister of Charity. We thank God for blessing the Congregation with our first Malawian Sister.

Mary Aikenhead in a letter dated 1844 spoke of a call to Religious Life as 'a great grace of a supernatural vocation'.



SR TERESITA MARCELO -

**ON PROMOTING THE LIFE STORY OF MARY AIKENHEAD AND THE CAUSE OF MARY AIKENHEAD (Induction of new Staff, RSC Congregation-  
cial Office, Sydney, Australia, 28 January, 2025)**

238 years ago on January 19, 1787, our Foundress Mary Aikenhead was born in Cork, Ireland. Her life and death on July 22nd, 1858, 166 years ago always remind me of the embodiment of St Paul's words (Rm 14:7)

*"The life and death of each of us has its influence on others".*

The stories about Mary Aikenhead's life, spirit, her deep sense of mission and service of the poor has been extensively known in different parts of the world and continues up to the present time.

This led to a collaborative effort by Sisters of Charity from Ireland, England/Scotland, USA, Australia, Zambia, Malawi and Nigeria establishing a group called The Cause Contact Group of Sisters with representatives from the countries I just mentioned.

While one of the intentions of this group is for Mary Aikenhead to be acknowledged publicly, with the authority of the Church (Vatican) towards sainthood, more importantly, it is to let Mary Aikenhead's love of Christ and the poor continue to be significantly relevant in our world. Up to the present time, the sisters who are members of The Cause of Mary Aikenhead Group continue to receive tremendous support, stories and prayers from many people globally who have received blessings, healing, and also what some recipients of Mary Aikenhead's prayers have called, "miracles".

However, these need to be considered by the appropriate authority in the Vatican for authenticity.

We have now reached the second stage of her canonization process, when on the 18th March 2015, Mary Aikenhead was declared Venerable Mary Aikenhead. We hope the third stage would be forthcoming when she will be declared Blessed, then finally to be declared publicly as a Saint. However, in the hearts of many Sisters of Charity, Mary Aikenhead is already revered as a saint and an inspiration for us to continue Mary Aikenhead's spirit and mission in our daily life. We live courageously with compassion, care and service of our sisters and those who are poor, vulnerable and marginalized.

We have a fourth vow called "service of the poor". We hold in faith, hope and love Mary Aikenhead's guiding words: "[We] can do all things in God who gives [us] strength", in what has become our Sisters of Charity's motto: *"The love of Christ urges us on"*.

## HERITAGE CENTRE, LONDON

Sr Maria Coates tells us that their orientation days for staff go very well and are much appreciated. The visitors book received some very nice comments about the care at St Joseph's Hospice. Prayer cards continue to be taken by patients, their families and others who visit the Chapel.

This year commemorates the 120th anniversary of the foundation of St Joseph's Hospice. The Hospice story will be featured throughout the year in many different ways especially via the website and social media channels.

## THE WONDERFUL WORKS OF THE INTERNET

Sr Helen Butler sent us a report of a lady in Australia who began a virtual prayer journey around the globe asking for prayers from Church communities, religious congregations and individuals from 69 different countries on behalf of her friend, Phil, who had an incurable form of cancer. This man was given the possibility of living just 5 months. The Lady set about asking for prayers for Phil, and received 350 responses and he, although not cancer free, and receiving treatment, is still living three years later and grateful to all who have offered prayers for him.

Sr Helen had invited the sisters and Friends of Mary Aikenhead in Ireland to pray for him through Mary Aikenhead's intercession.

A young girl who has a vision impairment has been included in our prayers for a number of years. She is now nineteen, and she wrote an article about her condition in one of the leading newspapers. She doesn't let her condition stop her from achieving her goals. She is now in her first year in College and loves to play sports.

**FAVOURS GRANTED** Sr Mary Christian sent in this report of two favours granted through the intercession of Venerable Mary Aikenhead.

Favour No 1: Adela is our Chef at Rosemount, Donnybrook. She has two Favours: 1. Her car was damaged by a delivery van outside her house and the Insurance Co. would not believe her. She prayed to Venerable Mary Aikenhead and found evidence on a neighbour's CCTV which sorted the problem. She attributed this success to Venerable Mary.

Favour No. 2: \_At the beginning of 2024 Adela was told by her landlord that she would have to vacate her rental property at the end of the year. She tried every avenue possible to secure accommodation for herself and her 13 year old son, but all was in vain. What was she going to do? In September/October 2024 she began praying to Mary Aikenhead to find her a solution and we, in the Rosemount Community, accompanied her in prayer. All over Christmas her situation was desperate. She was then promised a house in April by Dublin City Council but where was she to go in the meantime. She believes that through the intercession of Mary Aikenhead she finally got a house a week after she was evicted. Her first response was to visit Mary Aikenhead's grave and light a candle and then light a candle before Mary Aikenhead's picture in the hallway of Rosemount. She prays daily with a lighted candle in front of a picture of Mother Mary Aikenhead in thanksgiving for the favours

Please let us know when favours/graces are granted: email: [rsccause@caritas.com](mailto:rsccause@caritas.com)

**PRAYER REQUESTS** We continue to pray for Pope Francis; Sharon Kirkwood and a Dublin Doctor who both suffer from Motor Neurone Disease; homelessness; migrants and refugees; good results in health tests; prevention of human trafficking, and many, many more. Let us **'pray fervently'** (Ven Mary Aikenhead 1843)