

*I never wanted to
become a nun.*

*I only wanted
to serve the poor*

*because that seemed to be what
God was asking of me.*



M. C. McAuley



CIRCLE OF MERCY

Northern Province

How it all began

Congregational Chapter 1994 Mission Directive 5

“We commit ourselves to
continually search out and create together
new ways of being
life-giving Mercy communities
in mission.”

Rather than inviting

lay people to associate with the sisters,
and to consider making a commitment to

The Mercy Congregation,

we were drawn to a more **collaborative model,**

where small groups of sisters and lay people

committed themselves to

mutual bonding, support and outreach.

A **'Circle of Mercy'**

is the coming together of

compassionate people from

different walks of life who,

with Sisters of Mercy,

wish to live the gospel according to the

**Who may become
a Member of the
Circle of Mercy?**

Christian men and
women can identify with the
spirit of Catherine
and who are willing to
engage with others
continuing the work
which she began ways of

**What does
Membership
Entail?**

A programme of regular
meetings

that will enable members

PRAYER

MUTUAL SUPPORT
through

COMPASSIONATE SERVICE

to use their gifts creatively

Key Elements

A sense of being called by God

An identification with Catherine McAuley and a merciful way of being

A desire to link with other compassionate people in various walks of life

An opportunity to participate in existing and/or new Mercy ministries

Participation in initial Programme of Preparation and on-going programmes of formation together

Regular attendance at meetings and /or reflection days

Sharing of group leadership

Formal, ritualized commitment to the Circle of Mercy

Networking of local circles at Provincial/Congregational level

Built in process for annual evaluation

Starter Kit

Invitation Brochures

Preparation Programme

Outline for local information evening

List of themes for Preparation Programme

CIRCLE OF MERCY



PREPARATION PROGRAMME

List of Contents

1. Welcome to the Circle of Mercy
3. Core Group
4. Identity Statement
5. Application Form
6. Format for Meetings
7. Recommended Resources
8. Themes for Programme
9. Commitment Card

The Preparation Programme,
which MUST be completed
by EVERYONE
consists of eleven themes.

Eight of these

MUST be completed

prior to Initial Commitment

On completion of the
Preparation Programme,
(or 8 themes),

A PERIOD OF DISCERNMENT

MUST

be undertaken by

EVERYONE.

Themes

Catherine the Laywoman

Catherine the Religious

Catherine's Call

Catherine's Humanity

Catherine's Concern for Those in Need

Catherine's Trust in Providence

Catherine the Enabler

Catherine's Generosity and Hospitality

Catherine woman of Scripture (Quaker Influence)

Catherine's Acceptance of the Cross

Catherine said:

- *"I never wanted to become a nun. I only wanted to serve the poor, because that seemed to be what God was asking of me."*
- *"God makes use of various means to further the accomplishment of God's designs, some of which if we had a choice in the matter, would not be according to our views, but which eventually turn out to be the most conducive to the work of the Almighty."*
- *Whatever way God takes to carry out the work, we should with cheerfulness and holy joy do the part allotted us, giving God glory by our faith and confidence.*
- *We can never say it is enough!*

Catherine's Prayer

O God, I consecrate to you my will,
that it may be conformable to you in all things -
What should I desire or will
but the will of my Lord and God?
O dear Jesus, may your will be done in me.
Let self-will reign no longer in me ...
Behold me now entirely at your disposal.

My Prayer:

*I ask God for the gift of "letting go" of my own
will - even in the smallest way -
in imitation of Catherine.*

Refreshments



Catherine of Siena

1

*Catherine -
the lay*

GATHERING & GREETING

THEME: CATHERINE THE LAY WOMAN

Scripture:

*Give justice to the weak and orphaned.
Maintain the right of the afflicted and the
destitute. Ps 82:3*

A woman who dared to be different

Catherine McAuley was fifty-three years of age when she became a religious and only did so in order to regularise the work she had done all her life as a lay woman. Trust in God, and her natural talents, made Catherine her own woman and a staunch lay leader at a time when female involvement in any area was deeply resented. She set about bringing merciful relief to people craving for spiritual and material help, for justice, knowledge and love. The house she built on Baggot Street was at once 'a hostel, a sheltered workshop and employment bureau' - big innovations for that era. Her vision attracted other lay women who joined in the good work. The original intention being that of 'a society of pious secular ladies who would devote themselves to the relief of suffering and the instruction of the ignorant. They would retain liberty to leave when they were no longer inclined to render such service.' It was as a lay woman that Catherine set out for France to learn appropriate teaching methods for her school. As lay women she and her early companions sought visiting privileges at Sir Patrick Dunn's hospital, to comfort the sick and dying, at a time when a Catholic priest was rarely granted entrance.

Thinking about it:

1. Have there been any situations in my life where I 'dared to be different'?
2. Who are the people in my parish/neighbourhood who need help today, and who perhaps only I can serve?

Talking about it: Voluntary Sharing

Empowering

Catherine was quick to recognise the potential of the women of Ireland for bringing about change in an unjust society. She believed that, *'No work of charity can be more productive of good to society, or more conducive to the happiness of the poor than the careful instruction of women'*.

Since the poor women she came in contact with had little or no talent for home management, and even less in the area of 'transferable and marketable skills to use for employment,' Catherine began to teach them domestic skills and needle work. Eventually she opened a shop as an outlet for their products.

Thinking about it:

1. What have I to contribute to the empowerment of women in my locality?
2. How might I make my talents available to others?

Talking about it: Voluntary Sharing

First Commitment

Formal ceremony where –

the new member reads aloud the Commitment

statements and dates the Commitment Card,

and is presented with the Circle of Mercy emblem.

Form of Commitment

ng come to know Catherine McAuley as a woman who responded to
s call to reach out in compassion to those around her, especially those
ed, I wish to day to answer God's call to me to discover
eveal the loving kindness of God in all the circumstances of my life.

e to do this in relationship with other compassionate people, from
us walks of life, who desire to live the Gospel in the spirit of Catherine
ourage and complete trust in God.

efore commit myself, for one year, as a member of the 'Circle of
' in

ept that its core values are prayer, mutual support and compassionate
ce.

re to become more aware of these values in my personal life, and as a
ber of the 'Circle of Mercy;

he God of all Mercy bless us; and may Catherine the first Sister of
y accompany us and inspire us as we commit ourselves to

**After
Initial Commitment
what next?**

The second and subsequent years are not as formal as the first year.

The basic format remains the same but the focus shifts from Catherine to ourselves:

'How has God been merciful to me?'

'How have I been merciful to others?'

Since our last meeting.

Forward planning:

help for leading meetings, each member is given a booklet containing the Guidelines and an extensive list of suitable readings for meetings, including poetry texts from O.T. and N.T and quotations from Catherine under the headings of: Prayer, Mutual Support, and Compassionate Service.

Core Group also have several resources – books/cds etc - which are available for Circles to buy.

Statistics

17 Circles

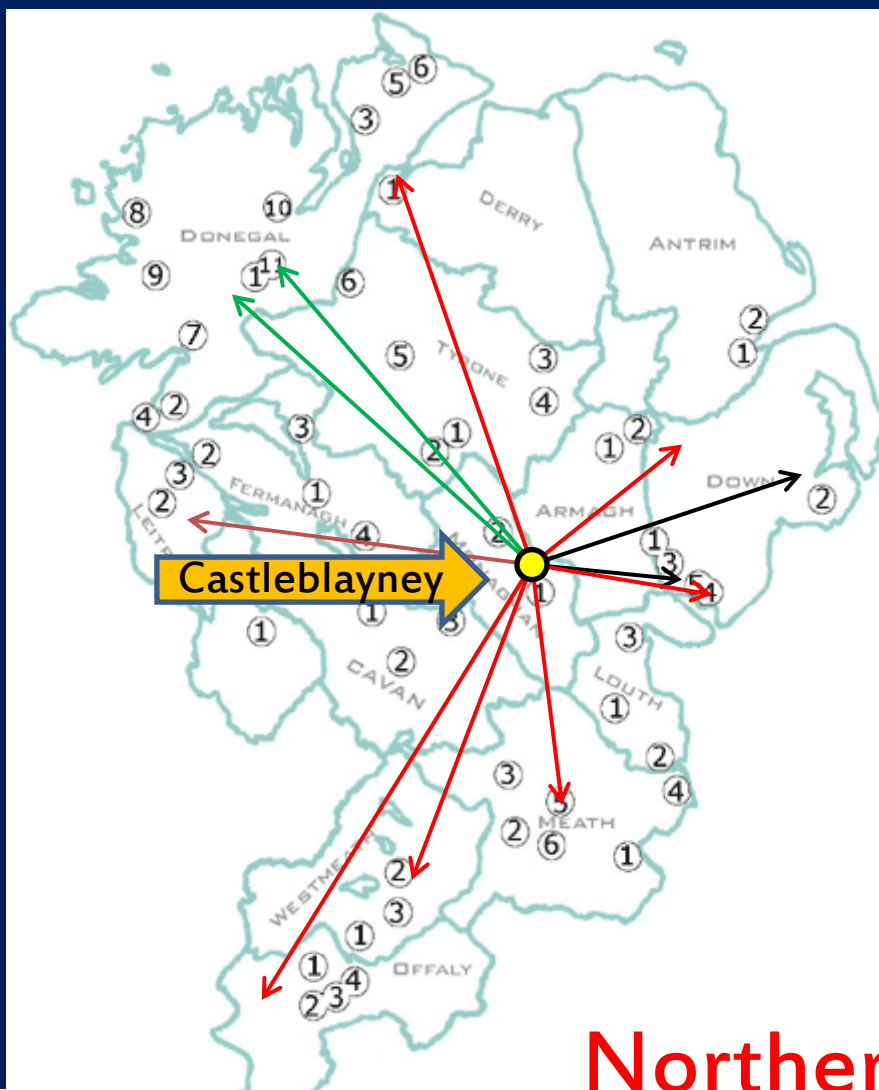
130

members

25

105

boy
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ry
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wnpatr
eggan
rencet



Laytown
Mt. Bolus
Navan
Newry
Rochfort-
bridge
Warrenpo
int

Northern Province

Each Circle has a
CONTACT PERSON

Representatives from each Circle
are invited to a meeting
at least once a year

Core Group

Bonnie Brennan RSM - Athboy

Barry Davey - Derry

Christina Ferris - Laytown

Chris Hegarty RSM – Doire

Una Lawless - Warrenpoint

Marie McDonough - Laytown

Catherine McEvoy - Laurencetown

Joe McGrath - Navan

Mary O'Connor RSM – Mount Bolus

Assumpta Wallace RSM - Laytown

For practical reasons, neighbouring
Circles come together in Clusters for
Commitment Ceremonies and other
events throughout the year.

We have 5 Clusters

Once every three years
we come together as a
full group for our
Commitment / Re-

Commitment / Re-

**Each Core Group Member
is responsible for a
cluster of Circles**

What next?

Our dream is that the Circle of Mercy will be a reality in each area where there is a Mercy community, so that the **charism** of Catherine McAuley will continue when there may no longer be a

We continue to promote the
Circle of Mercy by

Offering to deliver talks
in the various communities

publishing and delivering

The Canonisation Cause of Catherine McAuley

ward for the Canonisation of
 ey have organised a Symposium
 to know Catherine McAuley'.
 in the Iontas Centre,
 Saturday 25th April 2009.
 offers from a Lecture or a Debate
 is divided into Sessions
 iving a Main Speaker and a

Why do we need a Symposium?

we know a lot
 and some of us
 e can always

more and , while we patiently
 E, we can spread the word and
 AR DEVOTION.

ers and the Circle of Mercy?
 come along, provided they have
 forwarded the booking form.
 eakers?

ng bit!! Our main speakers are
 M from USA and Caitlin
 Director of Mercy International.
 eak on their given topic for
 topics have been taken from the
 (Preparation Programme!!)

The responders are

(1) our own Bonnie Brennan RSM,
 (2) Aine Barrins from Western
 Province and (3) Mary English, a
 principal teacher from Kildare. Anne Reid, who we all
 know from Baggot Street will give the opening
 address and Elizabeth Manning , Leader of the
 Western Province will keep everything running

smoothly.

If you haven't already booked your
 place, then please do so a.s.a.p.

It will be a day to remember -

to hear and share thoughts on Catherine, meet old
 friends from across the Emerald Isle and further and
 hopefully, further the Canonisation Cause.

How proud Catherine will be to see Sisters and Lay
 people joining together to talk about her legacy to us
 all.

Looking forward to meeting you all there!

More information on the forthcoming Symposium
 and booking forms can be downloaded from <http://>



Athlone

Ballinamore

Clara

Derry

Doire

Dowdstown

Downpatrick

Killeegan

Laurencetown

Laytown (2)

Mount Bolus

Navan

Rochesforbridge

Warrenpoint

Circle of Mercy (Northern Province)

February 2009 Issue 3

The Catherine McAuley Rose

(with the permission of the trustees of the Sisters of Mercy, North Sydney)

On the 8th September 2005, (the 175th anniversary of Catherine
 McAuley, Anna Marie Doyle and Elizabeth Harley beginning
 their training with the Presentation Sisters in George's Hill), each
 province in Ireland was gifted with a
Catherine McAuley Rose Bush.

The Rose Bush was in the inspiration of St. Josephine Mary, a
 nurse at Mater Misericordiae in North Sydney NSW

It's registration name is 'CACibrua' and was bred by Jack &
 Christensen (USA). Resulting from the controlled pollination of
 Ginger Snap x Brandy by Sunspire, this cluster type, remontant,
 bush rose has double, weakly fragrant, yellow flowers. It was
 evaluated together with Friesia and Shining Hour at Narramine,
 New South Wales, Australia



"See how quietly the great God does all His mighty works"

Welcome to our new members.

Congratulations to the four
 new members of Dowdstown
 who made their First
 Commitment in January
 2009.
 We look forward to
 welcoming even more new
 members in the future.



Members of Dowdstown making their FIRST COMMITMENT in January 2009

News from the Core Group

In November 2008, the Core Group met in Laytown for a 'brainstorming session'.
 The Circle of Mercy is now ten years old and we felt it was time to re-visit the original concept and makes changes,
 if necessary. At the previous Representative's Meeting, all Circles were invited to look at the Preparation
 Programme and forward their thoughts to the Core Group. We met
 for a full day and although it was an intensive day's work, it was a
 very worthwhile experience. Updated copies of the Guidelines etc
 will be issued to each Circle in due course.



by Ruile rsm CLT, Anne Reid (Associate) Dolores Magee rsm (Gt Britain Federation.) Ethel Bignell (MIA)
 e of Mercy), Ailish O'Brien rsm Congregational Communications, Anne Hannon rsm (Vice-Postulator, Fr. Ciaran O'Carroll

Want to Join Us?

part of a Circle and feel you would like to start a group in your area,
 ome more information, please contact us at circleofmercy@yahoo.com.
 is a lot of interest around the Province, and we would love to come and talk to you -



2010 is the 10th
anniversary of the
commencement of the
1st Preparation
Programme of the Circle
of Mercy in the

North America

To celebrate this, we are
holding our
Commitment ceremony
in Castleblayney on 18th
Our guest speaker will
September 2010
be

We would be
delighted if
you could
join us!

Thank You!

