



# Mercy Associates South Central Province

Mercy Associates was launched in the  
Killeshin Hotel , Portlaoise on Saturday  
17<sup>th</sup> Jan 1998

177 were present this included 28  
interested

Sisters and their lay friends.



# Present Reality



- 32 Sisters of Mercy acting as mentors (mostly working in pairs)
- 20 groups
- 178 members approx
- Age profile of mentors and associates
- Just a couple of associates in their forties



# Structure

Associates meet once a month with the exception of the summer months

Mentors' Meeting every September

Core Group meets once a term

Annual Gathering of Associates last Saturday of April

Renewal commitment for associates every September

Newsletter once a year.



# Format of Meetings



- Prayer
- Some input on the life and spirituality of Catherine
- Some topic for discussion based on Chapter Statement or Congregational Ministries or local Mercy history
- Linking in with local Mercy Ministries and needs
- Linking in and supporting Mercy Missions



# Educational Initiatives

- Sharing Hope and Imagination  
Process Dalgan May 2008, breaking  
open the Chapter Statement
- Awakening the Dreamer Be the  
Change Symposium
- Mercy the Sympathy of God DVD by  
Deirdre Mullen
- Writing to Irish Prisoners overseas



# Mercy Projects

■ Fundraising initiatives for

■ Kenya

■ South Africa

■ Brazil



# Young Mercy Friends

- This initiative was undertaken with 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils in the Primary Schools of Askea Carlow and Naas
- Piloted Programme in 2008
- Concerns around child protection
- New catechetical programme broad based and includes , new universe story, environmental issues etc.



# Challenges

- How to sustain enthusiasm
- How to attract New Members
- How to attract a younger age group
- Need for guidelines to be put in place
- Minimum number of meetings necessary for to maintain healthy life in the group
- The reality of ageing mentors and associates





# Challenges

- How to address and meet the needs of groups at different levels e.g. new established groups as opposed to ones in existence for a few years.
- How to meet the need of a new member joining an established group
- How to get associates to take ownership for the life of the group , convening meetings, agenda etc.
- Some groups still very reliant on the Sister Mentor.
- More autonomy
- Difficulty of getting a good guest speaker for the Gathering Day and to come up with acceptable topics or theme for that day.

