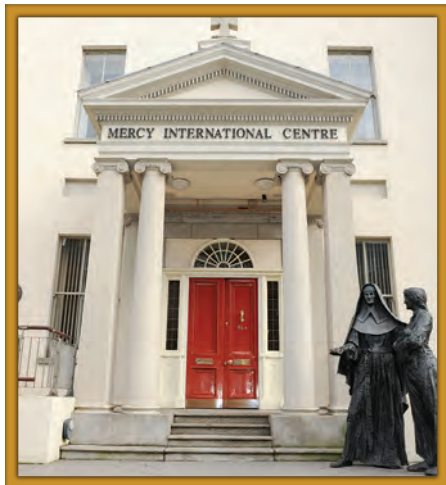


# CATHERINE MCAULEY



HER **HOUSE** MADE **WORKS** POSSIBLE  
OF MERCY OF MERCY

ENDOWMENT FUND: ♥ FURTHERING MERCY

Catherine McAuley:

# THE WOMAN WHO MADE MERCY POSSIBLE



*"The poor need help today, not next week."*

- Catherine McAuley

The story begins at an unlikely time in an unlikely place with an unlikely woman. It begins in the early 1800s in Dublin, Ireland, with Catherine McAuley.

Catherine was the foundress of the House of Mercy and one of the three first

Sisters of Mercy - a remarkable woman of courage and charity who was stunned by the overwhelming needs of the poor. She was a woman of great compassion and prayer - a woman comfortable in Dublin society turned social worker - who put her faith into action.

## Table of Contents

The woman who made Mercy possible.....2

The House of Mercy made works of Mercy possible..... 4

Pull-out map Mercy network worldwide: About Mercy International Association and Mercy International Centre..... 6

One of the first large classrooms in Ireland..... 8

One of Ireland's first Catholic hospitals ..... 9

One of the first uncloistered groups of religious women .....10

Inspiration to lay leaders, young and old, the world over .....11

What your gift supports .....12

While Catherine spent her early years in a loving home, she knew loss early in life. Her father, who worked tirelessly helping his poor neighbors, died when she was five. That loss, and the later death of her mother in her teen years, gave Catherine an early awareness of how fleeting life is - how quickly a secure, safe and stable life can change without any warning.

With no family inheritance, Catherine had no means to provide for herself. Although family and friends furnished bed and board, it wasn't long before Catherine knew firsthand what it was to be hungry and to sleep on a cold, hard floor.

As a young woman in the 1800s, while living with relatives, Catherine was invited to live with William and Catherine Callaghan - friends of the family. For nearly 20 years, she was loved as the daughter they never had. When the Callaghans died, they left Catherine an unexpected inheritance.

In 1827, Catherine did the unthinkable. She used her million-dollar inheritance to open the first House of Mercy on Baggot Street - right in the heart of one of Dublin's wealthiest neighborhoods. Catherine inspired many to walk with her. She animated others at the center of wealth, power and influence to share in her heroic efforts of connecting the rich to the poor, the healthy to the sick, the educated and skilled to the uneducated, and the powerful to the weak.

If not for Catherine, the world would lack thousands of schools, hospitals and community programs today, and more than 250,000 lay people wouldn't have meaningful work. Because Catherine persevered in the face of adversity, countless people benefit today.

Catherine and the Sisters of Mercy faced roadblocks at every turn. They had to eke out



Statue of Catherine with a woman and child already embraced in the circle of Mercy, while Catherine's hand reaches out to welcome the stranger in need.

an existence while tending to staggering poverty and disease. Although Catherine came into an inheritance, she didn't hold on to what she had.

By the time she had built the first House of Mercy and funded seemingly endless needs, the money was all but gone and the Sisters of Mercy, many of whom came from privileged families, faced poverty themselves. Catherine and the Sisters knew days when there was little left but a bit of bread and soup to eat. And yet, they endured.

They carried on because they were the Sisters of Mercy. They were women who saw the face of God in the penniless mother, in the child who had no means for an education, in the man dying of typhoid.

Instead of shrinking from the task at hand, those remarkable Sisters went into the slums, the prisons, the hovels - where no one else dared go.

They went because they were Mercy.

Having been declared a Venerable Servant of God by Pope John Paul II in 1990, Catherine is already on the path to sainthood. As this process continues, the **House of Mercy on Baggot Street has and will increasingly become a place of pilgrimage** for people seeking to know her and to understand better the Mercy mission and the works of Mercy that live on today.

## A brief history

1778 Catherine is born in Ireland

1783 Catherine's father dies when she is five

1797 Catherine's mother dies

1822 William Callaghan dies, leaving Catherine a million-dollar inheritance

1827 First House of Mercy opens on Baggot Street, a wealthy area in Dublin

1830 Catherine, at 52, enters into a 15-month rigorous training for religious life in order to continue the works of Mercy

1831 to 1841 Fourteen Houses of Mercy open across Ireland and England

1841 Catherine dies at 63; in her lifetime, she suffers the deaths of more than 30 loved ones

# THE HOUSE OF MERCY MADE WORKS OF MERCY POSSIBLE

Clockwise from top: House of Mercy on Baggot Street; spiral staircase leads to Catherine's room where her desk (bottom left) and writing tools can still be seen



The 185-year-old walls of the House of Mercy testify to a mission that has not only thrived, but spread throughout the world because of daring women willing to respond to the needs of the world's poorest and neediest.

The story of how one seemingly ordinary, unremarkable woman was able to accomplish extraordinary, remarkable feats within the social confines of 1800s Ireland is at the core of why it's vital to ensure the works of Mercy and the first House of Mercy remain intact for sharing

the mission and the vision of Mercy for years to come. Today, Mercy International Association sets out to raise funds to establish an endowment that will safeguard the future of the works of Mercy and the House of Mercy.



All interior and exterior photos of the house in this publication are by David Knight



Clockwise from top: Chapel; Callaghan Room; a book, letter and rosary of Catherine McAuley, along with original keys to the House of Mercy; Catherine's tomb



For millions of underserved people, Mercy began at 64A Lower Baggot Street, one of the most prestigious neighborhoods in Dublin, where Catherine brought together the rich and the poor. It was a bold move, one that proved providential.

Today, the House of Mercy serves as both a heritage centre and retreat house for more than 8,000 visitors each year. It is a hub for everything from counseling to wellness services, international outreach activities and global action programs focused on vital issues such as human trafficking, homelessness and environmental concerns.



Furthering Mercy:

# THE MERCY NETWORK WORLDWIDE

**Mercy International Association**, founded in 1992, is an organization whose purpose is to inspire Sisters of Mercy and their associates to model the spirit of Catherine McAuley in ways which are creative and appropriate to the needs of our time and to foster unity among Sisters of Mercy worldwide. The Association is separate and autonomous from other Mercy organizations around the world, but shares a spiritual bond with all Mercy organizations and operates from the House of Mercy.

**Mercy International Centre**, the official name of the house built by Catherine McAuley, is still lovingly called the House of Mercy by most people. The legal name was changed in 1992 when Mercy International Association was formed.

Since 1998, **Mercy International Association** has been represented at the United Nations by a Sister who interacts with the U.N. system on its behalf. This enables Sisters worldwide to influence issues such as poverty, women's rights and safety, social development and sustainable development. The Sisters also work with the European Union and other world forums. Joined through the House of Mercy, the Sisters have the capacity to link together in a unified response to various social issues in 46 countries while lobbying for systemic change at national and international levels.

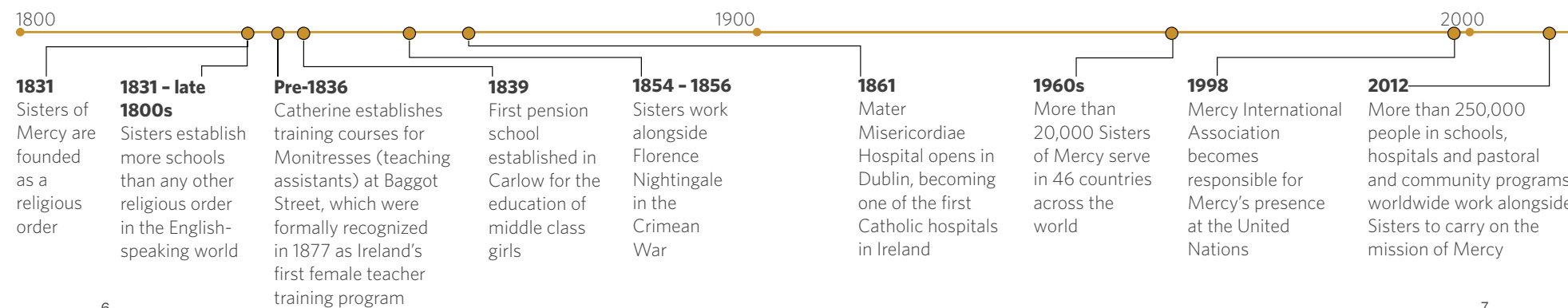


Women and children helped by Sisters' refuge for women

### The Sisters in action

Aida, who grew up in a poor village in Bolivia, is just one among thousands across the world who become victims of human trafficking. When she crossed into Argentina in hopes of a better life, she soon found herself forced to work in a sweat shop where she was frequently beaten and raped. More than a year later, a pregnant Aida escaped. The Buenos Aires women's police division knew the Sisters of Mercy had a **refuge for women**. The Sisters took Aida in and through various channels returned Aida to her family and village in Bolivia.

## MERCY'S HISTORY



### A Sister tells the story of her time

Sister Clare Augustine Moore, one of the first Sisters of Mercy, catalogued in intricate calligraphy and illuminated art the lives, works and mission of the Sisters of Mercy. So inspired by Catherine and her mission, Clare devoted every spare minute to documenting the story of the Sisters of Mercy in what is today, for the most part, a lost art form. An extensive collection is on display in the Mercy heritage room at the House of Mercy.



### To learn more

If you would like to tour this amazing house and experience Irish hospitality firsthand, or if you have questions about the House of Mercy or Mercy International Association, contact Sister Mary Reynolds, Mercy International Association executive director, at [director@mercyinternational.ie](mailto:director@mercyinternational.ie) or visit [mercyworld.org](http://mercyworld.org).

Furthering Mercy:

## ONE OF THE FIRST LARGE CLASSROOMS IN IRELAND



**"No work of charity can be so productive of good to society . . . as the careful instruction of women." – Catherine McAuley**

For Catherine, who was born into a wealthy family, education came via private tutors. For people who were less fortunate in Ireland, there was no public education. In the late 1820s, during Catherine's only trip outside of Ireland and England, she visited schools in Paris, France, where she observed firsthand how to teach the masses.

In a time when the law prohibited the education of Catholics, and well before the government thought of universal education, Catherine opened the doors of her Baggot Street school to 200 poor children. The House of Mercy also taught academic and technical skills to young women to prepare them for employment. In addition, Catherine pioneered the introduction of teacher training for women in Ireland. She was training and salaried teachers prior to 1836, when the first government teacher training college opened, which was reserved exclusively for males for another decade.



Josephat Nyariki, right, in Kenya

### Continuing the works of Mercy today

In the slums of Nairobi, Kenya, the only running water is what flows in the sewage ditches of the narrow dirt paths between the small shacks built on layers of garbage. Begging came naturally to teenagers Josephat Nyariki and Moreen Mumyaka, for in the slums of Nairobi, no one is guaranteed a daily meal. And certainly not an education.

But in 1985, the Sisters of Mercy opened a small school in partnership with the Mukuru Promotion Centre in the Nairobi slums. Today, the Sisters run four primary schools and provide scholarships for more than 150 secondary school students. Both Josephat and Moreen found their futures in school. Josephat completed high school and Moreen studied hairdressing as part of college skills training. Today, Josephat is continuing his education in university and Moreen is a successful salon owner in Nairobi.

"I am very grateful because they really helped me to be where I am and achieve my dreams," said Josephat.

Hundreds of thousands of students throughout the world are being taught today in Mercy schools and colleges. It's no wonder considering that the Sisters of Mercy founded more schools than any other religious order in the English-speaking world. In addition, thousands of students worldwide receive educational funding through the Sisters' scholarship and sponsorship programs.

Furthering Mercy:

## ONE OF IRELAND'S FIRST CATHOLIC HOSPITALS

During some of the worst epidemics of cholera, typhus, influenza and other diseases in the 1830s, the Sisters nursed thousands of sick and dying people in their homes and within the walls of the House of Mercy. As need dictated, the Sisters converted rooms to care for the sick, even making accommodations for surgery when the need arose.

Later, one of the first Sisters of Mercy, Ellen Whitty, who had witnessed the compassion shown to the sick within the walls of the House, would go on to build the Mater Misericordiae Hospital in Dublin, one of the country's finest Catholic hospitals to this day and the second Mercy hospital in the world. The first Mercy hospital in the world opened in 1847 in the United States in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.



**"[Jesus] allows us graciously to assist Him in the person of the sick." – Catherine McAuley**



Yulita with baby Moses and a fellow Papua New Guinean

### Continuing the works of Mercy today

When Yulita, a 22-year-old first-time mother from the remote village of Yoot in Papua New Guinea, went into labor, she wanted to have a traditional village delivery. But after two days of pain and little progress, her village elders called in the outsiders, Australian Sister of Mercy Maureen Sexton and her team from the maternal and infant health care program in the area.

Yulita knew little of what was going on, only that something was wrong. They later told her the baby was coming early and wasn't positioned correctly for a natural delivery. The next thing she knew, she was in a paddle boat, being taken to the nearest health clinic at Niogamban, four hours away.

They made it to the village, but as one of the men was helping her walk to the clinic, the baby finally came, a tiny boy born on the banks of the river. Had they been in Yoot, where infant and maternal mortality rates are extremely high, the family would have only hoped that mother and baby didn't fall victim to complications or infection. But thanks to the Sisters of Mercy's program in Niogamban, they had a safe, clean place to be monitored, and today, Yulita and baby Moses are back in Yoot doing well.

In 1832, more than **50,000** people died of cholera in **IRELAND**. In contrast, there were about 9,000 H1N1 deaths worldwide in 2009.

According to the 1841 census of Ireland, only **37%** of males and **18%** of females could read and write.

Furthering Mercy:

## ONE OF THE FIRST UNCLOISTERED GROUPS OF RELIGIOUS WOMEN



“Let need be your cloister.” – Catherine McAuley

“Again and again, the Sisters of Mercy reached out to the unloved and impoverished people around them. They walked into areas where no one else would go . . . they walked to comfort the sick. They became known as the ‘walking nuns.’”

– John Fialka, author of *Sisters*

Long before Catherine’s time, women attempted to gather to care for those in need. To reach out, they required freedom to visit the slums, the jails and the sick. But by being cloistered – secluded in a monastery or a convent – they were unable to serve directly the communities around them.

Catherine was adamant that the Sisters of Mercy remain uncloistered, even writing it into the Mercy Rule that later would be approved by the Vatican. With a gentle tenacity, steely courage and the ability to move in all circles of life, Catherine was able to accomplish the impossible. Catherine’s world was one steeped in religious prejudices, limited recognition of women, class hierarchy and a traditional view of what vowed religious life looked like. And yet, she forged on and founded a staggering 14 Mercy houses across Ireland and England in 10 years.



Otila, right, with her daughter near the U.S.-Mexico border

### Continuing the works of Mercy today

In 2001, 39-year-old Otila fled the violence and poverty of her native Mexico with her family in search of a better life in the United States. But her American dream quickly became a nightmare. The stress of life in an unfamiliar place and lack of steady work for her and her husband led to domestic abuse.

Otila sought refuge at the Sisters of Mercy-run Casa de Misericordia domestic violence shelter in Laredo, Texas, for herself and her children. The Sisters helped her as she struggled with illness and lack of money and food, forging a bond that has lasted to this day.

Otila is now 50. Recently, her home was raided by immigration agents, and her two children younger than 5, two older sons and a daughter-in-law were deported. Only Otila and her 14-year-old daughter remain in the U.S. Working with other agencies, the Sisters of Mercy have helped her find food, money for rent and access to medical care. But despite enduring these hardships and recently being diagnosed with ovarian cancer, Otila spends her good days giving back to the Casa de Misericordia shelter.

“I feel better when I am helping others,” said Otila. “They’ve made me feel welcome and even helped my daughter get to her eighth grade prom. Mercy is the only family I have.”

Furthering Mercy:

## INSPIRATION TO LAY LEADERS, YOUNG AND OLD, THE WORLD OVER

In recent years, more than 1,000 Mercy lay leaders across the globe, including youth leaders from Mercy schools, have made the pilgrimage that begins at the House of Mercy in Dublin. Such experience gives them an opportunity to get in touch with the original dream of Mercy and to strengthen their commitment to carrying the mission into the future.

After World Youth Day in Spain was set for 2011, a group of Sisters decided to extend an invitation to stop over in Dublin for a three-day Mercy pilgrimage. Because



Youth at the Dublin meeting for Young Mercy Leaders

of the success of the Dublin meeting for Young Mercy Leaders – with more than 140 students from 25 Mercy schools in Australia, New Zealand, the U.S., England and Ireland in attendance – the House of Mercy hosts frequent conferences, including one in July 2013 for secondary students and one in 2014 for college students.

“Everywhere you go, there’s Mercy,” said Abby Culp, Mercy High School in Omaha, Nebraska, in the U.S. “Catherine’s mission of charity and hope is still alive today. It’s truly incredible to think of the global impact of Mercy’s work.”

### Continuing the works of Mercy today

Many people become leaders in their community because at some point in their lives they are touched by Mercy. For 15-year-old Hassina, who was born into a refugee camp in Eastern Sudan to parents who lost everything when they fled their home in Eritrea, Mercy made all the difference.

Because of Mercy’s work with the United Nations, Hassina just graduated as the top student out of 17 primary school classes and earned a U.N. scholarship to attend high school. Her goal: to study medicine and one day provide medical care to her community.



Hassina in Sudan

“To stand where Catherine stood, to walk the Dublin she walked, is to be moved in a way that will make me a better Mercy leader, carrying on the mission of Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy.”

– John Reynolds, board director, Mater Hospital, Brisbane, Australia

Furthering Mercy:

# “THE POOR NEED HELP TODAY, NOT NEXT WEEK.”

- Catherine McAuley

You have the opportunity to continue a 185-year-old tradition of supporting the mission of Mercy.  
The power of a single gift is proven in the inheritance William Callaghan left for Catherine.  
Everything we know today as Mercy was born from that one gift.

## By giving to the **€20 million** endowment fund: Furthering Mercy. . .

You contribute to assisting Mercy International Association to assure the works of Mercy continue and the House of Mercy remains open and accessible to those who seek a personal connection with Mercy.

You support the hundreds of thousands of women and children whose lives are touched each year through Mercy Global Action advocacy work.

The yearly cost to preserve Mercy throughout the world is

**€1,290,500**

Your gift to Mercy supports:

### Heritage and Spirituality . . . . . **€595,000**

The House of Mercy serves as both a heritage and renewal centre for more than 8,000 visitors each year.

### Communications . . . . . **€219,000**

Catherine wrote letters to animate, inspire, challenge and connect people in a communal enterprise of service. Today, Mercy International Centre uses a variety of means of communications to keep alive the spirit of Catherine in a world crying out for Mercy.

### Global Action . . . . . **€222,250**

The House of Mercy is the hub for everything from counseling to wellness services, international outreach activities and global action programs focused on vital issues such as human trafficking, homelessness and environmental concerns.

### Administration & Capital Expenses . . . . . **€254,250**

Catherine said that, “Mercy is the business of our lives.” By preserving the House of Mercy, the works of Mercy are made possible.

Expenses are expected to average €1.3 million annually over the coming years. Revenues generated by Mercy will average €0.7 million. The shortfall will be provided from the investment income of the endowment. The principal of the endowment will remain intact.

Thousands of feet have traversed the doorway of 64A Lower Baggot Street. Whether they came to learn or be nursed back to health, or to teach and console, they all found a home. The House of Mercy began with the vision of a single lay woman who believed she could help the poor. The iconic red door of the House of Mercy has always been open, offering the hospitality Catherine held so dear.

With your help, we can be assured that Catherine’s door will always remain open.

