

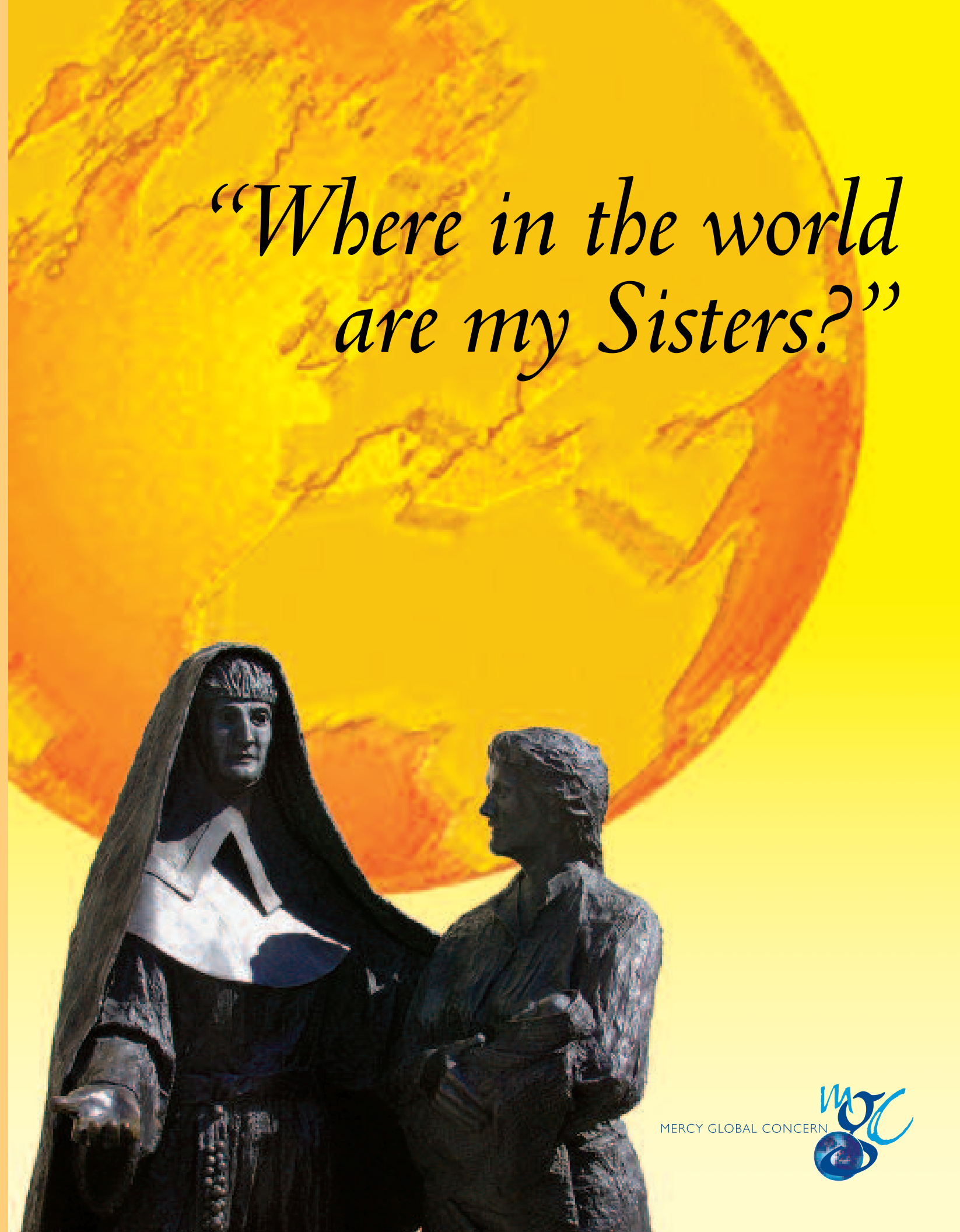
*“Where in the world  
are my Sisters?”*

In continuing to promote the vision of Catherine, the Sisters of Mercy established Mercy Global Concern (MGC) in 1998 in order to bring the Mercy spirit to the United Nations (UN), the one forum in the world where all nations have the potential to meet as equals. MGC is the mechanism by which all those associated with the Sisters of Mercy may interact with the UN system. At the UN, Sisters of Mercy can advocate for the less privileged and make explicit preferential options within a huge network of international bodies.

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Disclaimer: All statistics quoted were correct at the time of publication





# Acknowledgements

This book emerged as a result of a need to know about the world in which we, Sisters of Mercy, currently work, and because of a need to provide information on how we can join the dots and bridge the gap among and between Sisters of Mercy throughout the world. Mercy Global Concern (MGC) and Mercy International Justice Network (MIJN) worked with members of the international Mercy family throughout the world to gather data.

I am indebted to the leaders of Mercy International Association (MIA) for responding to my many queries re the whereabouts of membership, to Ethel Bignell, the administrator of MIA, for her help in tracking down some essential information. I wish to acknowledge the assistance of Pat Hartigan RSM, Marilee Howard RSM, Dale Jarvis RSM, Pat Kenney RSM, Ann Doherty RSM, Bernie Ryan RSM, Kathy Kelleher and Pat Chasse. I am particularly grateful to Anne Walshe and Adele Howard RSM of Fraynetwork multi-media for permission to use the Mercy Map.

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I thank Mary Schmuck RSM for her tireless recording and updating of global information. I wish to thank the Board of Mercy Global Concern and in a special way Carol Rittner RSM, Chair of the Board of MGC, for the 'generosity of space' which she kindly accords me, and for her friendship and support.

I am deeply grateful to Noeleen Heyzer, executive of UNIFEM at the UN, for the Foreword in this book. Noeleen is such an inspiration because she is a woman who monitors the

heartbeat of women throughout the world and defends their cause in so many ways. Noeleen really is a Sister of Mercy!

Carl Mullan, UN research assistant, was meticulous in recording and researching current facts pertaining to the 44 countries where we Sisters of Mercy are currently in ministry. Carl was a willing rock of stability for over four months and did the mammoth share of what has been produced. Carl said of Catherine – "She was some woman."

*“How will this information change my life?”*

I wish to thank our graphic designer, Glen, for his usual excellent rendering of words into design, Emer Ryan for her work in editing the script and Wendy Whitworth for her help with final proof-reading.

Finally, to all of you, Sisters of Mercy, in the 44 countries where we currently serve, thanks for your graciousness in responding to my emails and questions. **You live fully, though not in the glare of the spotlight, what we are supposed to be about as Sisters of Mercy. You represent the cloud of witnesses who bring the Beatitudes to life, who witness to Mercy and our Christian endeavours with integrity. Thank you.**

MERCY GLOBAL CONCERN



# A World of Mercy

## MERCY INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION



© Mercy International Association

*“Just as in Catherine’s time her desire to connect those who were rich with those who were poor resulted in the building of a House of Mercy in Baggot Street, so in this time of global interdependence, we seek to create ways of bridging the increasing gap between the rich and the poor by using our global Mercy network.”*

(MIA Visioning Statement)

# Foreword

**The work of a Sister of Mercy is not for the faint of heart! The Sisters of Mercy are a group of religious women who ‘walk the talk’ and who daily in their lives try to bridge the gap between policy and practice.**

**As Executive Director of the United Nations Women’s Programme (UNIFEM), I know the difficulties that are involved when any of us try to put in place rights-based or ethical programmes which are aimed at making the lives of all people – including women and children – better.**

The work we do at UNIFEM is based on a *holistic approach* – linking normative frameworks with institutional reform to bring concrete change to women on the ground. In each of the areas in which we work, whether strengthening women’s economic security or ending violence against women or promoting women’s equal access to justice, we focus on four interlinked strategies: changing laws and policies to eliminate discriminatory provisions and promote women’s human rights; building institutional capacity to implement these laws and policies and provide sufficient resources; supporting women’s rights advocates to monitor and track progress and mobilize constituencies to bring about change; and ending harmful practices and attitudes that perpetuate gender inequality worldwide.

These strategies work because they operate at multiple levels and across sectors to build strong partnerships and bring about sustainable change. This same interlinked approach informs all of the work that the Sisters of Mercy do to advance gender equality and social justice worldwide. In the last few years I have become familiar with the work of the Sisters of Mercy and appreciate the way they have partnered some of the projects of UNIFEM.

I am pleased as a member of the Board of Mercy Global Concern to affirm the work of the Sisters of Mercy worldwide and hope that this little booklet – ***Where in the world are my Sisters?*** – will help each of us to connect and do what we can to make the lives of all those less fortunate than us more equitable.

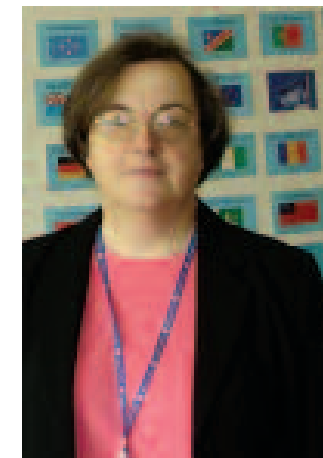


Noeleen Heyzer  
Executive Director,  
UNIFEM

# Introduction

***Only a few achieve the colossal task of holding together, without being split asunder, the clarity of their vision alongside an ability to take their place in a materialistic world. They are the modern heroes ... Artists at least have a form within which they can hold their own conflicting opposites together. But there are some who have no recognized artistic form to serve this purpose; they are artists of the living. To my mind these are the supreme heroes in a soulless society.***

(Irene Claremont De Castillejo)



Catherine McAuley was such a hero. She was born in Dublin, Ireland, on 29 September 1778,<sup>1</sup> one of three children of James and Elinor McCauley. James McAuley delighted in offering material support to the poor of the neighbourhood, while his wife Elinor was interested in the social life of fashionable Dublin. When Catherine was five years old

her father died, and Elinor was left with the responsibility of raising three young children all under the age of six. Having lived for a time with her uncle, Owen Conway, Catherine then moved to Coolock House, the twenty-two acre estate of William and Catherine Callaghan. When the couple died, Catherine was the sole beneficiary of their estate.

Pondering how best to help the poor of her day, Catherine purchased a property in Baggot Street and Herbert Street, Dublin, on which to erect a building that would serve as a centre for religious, educational and charitable activities. Towards the end of 1827, the house on Baggot Street was ready for occupation. The House of Mercy was opened on 24 September 1827. Little did Catherine and her companions, Mary Ann Doyle and Catherine Byrn, realize that this was the first step in the establishment of the worldwide institute of the Sisters of Mercy.

*“God’s gracious and compassionate Mercy is the wellspring, the source of never failing supply, for all those who cherish and seek to live out this gift of Mercy.”*

Catherine McAuley, touched and formed by this wellspring of God’s mercy, and in her desire to address poverty and its expression in 19th-century Ireland, began the Sisters of Mercy as a corporate body who would vow to serve the poor, sick and ignorant.

Today the Sisters of Mercy are in 44 countries, working in a multitude of ministries. The Mercy International Association is an association of the Global Mercy family and it is in Catherine’s House at Baggot Street that the leaders of the international Congregations gather to monitor and reflect on the needs of the world at the annual meeting. In the shadow of the grave of Catherine, a woman who was passionately committed to the struggle for justice, members meet and reflect on the needs of our time. The new vision emerging from the visioning process focuses on addressing global poverty and its current demonstration in the massive displacement of persons worldwide.

The following pages are testimony to the love that Sisters of Mercy worldwide have for Catherine McAuley. Like her, we too believe that it is not enough to be compassionate – we must ACT.

Deirdre Mullan RSM  
May 2007

1. There is some confusion as to the exact date of Catherine’s birth. For a discussion of the problem see Mary C. Sullivan, *Catherine Mc Auley and the Tradition of Mercy* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1995), p.344 n. 4

# Ireland



In 1831, she founded the Sisters of Mercy, a religious congregation largely involved in the care of the poor, the sick and educationally disadvantaged. In the early days, her work was mostly among the people of Dublin, but in time, the congregation spread and became one of the largest congregations of women, not in Ireland alone, but throughout the world.

Catherine's life as a Sister of Mercy spanned only ten years. In that time, she worked tirelessly to respond to the needs of the poor and sick. She set up a number of foundations for this purpose, both in Ireland and England, and was about to make her first foundation in the Americas when illness overtook her. She died in 1841.

Today, her Sisters work in 44 countries worldwide.

**Area:** 70,270 sq km

**Population:** 4,062,235 (July 2006 est.)

**Growth rate:** 0.5%

**Capital city:** Dublin

**Population of capital:** 1,015,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** Irish 92.9%, UK 2.7%, other EU 0.8%, other European 0.6%, Asian 0.6%, African 0.5%, US 0.3%, other: 1.6%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** Gaeilge (Irish) and English (both official with English dominant)

**Religions (in percentages):** Roman Catholic 88.4%, Anglican 3%, other Christian 1.6%, other 1.5%, unspecified 2%, none 3.5%

**Government:** Republic. Bertie Ahern, Taoiseach (Prime Minister) in a coalition government (since 1997, re-elected 2002). Parliament (Oireachtas) has two chambers: Dáil, with 166 members, and Seanad with 60 members.

**President:** Mary McAleese (since 1997)



## Economic profile (in US dollars)

*GDP:* \$102.4 billion

*World GDP ranking:* 50th

*GDP per person:* \$24,825

*Annual growth:* 3.6%

*Inflation:* 6.5%

*Major industries:* steel, lead, zinc, silver, aluminium, barite, and gypsum mining and processing; food products, brewing, textiles, clothing; chemicals, pharmaceuticals; machinery, rail transportation equipment, passenger and commercial vehicles, ship construction and refurbishment; glass and crystal; software, tourism

*Major trading partners:* US, UK, Belgium, Germany, France, Netherlands, Italy

*External debt:* N/A

## AIDS/HIV statistics

*Adult prevalence rate:* 0.1%

*People living with AIDS/HIV:* 2,800

## Literacy rate

*Total population:* 99%

*Male:* 99%

*Female:* 99%

## Life expectancy: 77 years

*Male:* 74 years

*Female:* 80 years

## Average number of children per woman: 1.9

## Population below poverty line: 10%



“In Catherine's time, her response to need took the shape of the opening of the House of Mercy at Baggot Street on the boundary between those who were rich and poor in Dublin at that time.”

(MIA Visioning Statement)



# Argentina



Seven Sisters of Mercy went to Buenos Aires from Ireland in 1856 to work with economically poor women and children in schools, hospitals and orphanages. Over the next years, the Sisters worked tirelessly to keep the mission alive. By 1875, they were no longer able to continue, given the political climate that threatened their lives and rendered them powerless in their efforts to serve. Even as they left Argentina, the Sisters knew that some day Mercy would return; and return we did, in 1890, fulfilling our former hopes.

Today, there are 19 Sisters of Mercy and 15 associates who minister, trying to respond to the country's severe economic distress. The Sisters provide direct service, and encourage people of influence to change policies that repress and marginalize nearly 50 per cent of the population.



**Area:** 2,780,400 sq km

**Population:** 39,921,833

**Growth rate:** 1.3%

**Capital city:** Buenos Aires

**Population of capital:** 3,047,000  
(greater Buenos Aires: 13,047,000)

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** white (mostly Spanish and Italian) 97%; mestizo (mixed white and Amerindian ancestry), Amerindian, or other non-white groups 3%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** Spanish (official) (95%), Italian (3%), English, German, French; minor groups maintain their languages: Quechua, Guarani and others.

**Religions (in percentages):** Roman Catholic 92% (official); Protestant, Evangelical, Jewish and Islamic minorities

**Government:** Presidential system. The National Congress (Legislature) has two chambers: Chamber of Deputies of the Nation, with 257 members; and the Senate of the Nation, with 72 members. Each province and the Federal District have three seats in the Senate.

**President:** Néstor Kirchner (since 2003)

## Economic profile (in US dollars)

*GDP:* \$197.6 billion

*World GDP ranking:* 20th

*GDP per person:* \$7,735

*Annual growth:* 1.3%

*Inflation:* 30.8%

*Major industries:* food processing, motor vehicles, consumer durables, textiles, chemicals and petrochemicals, printing, metallurgy, steel

*Major trading partners:* Brazil, Chile, US, China, Spain, Germany

*External debt:* \$136,709 million

## AIDS/HIV statistics

*Adult prevalence rate:* 0.7%

*People living with HIV/AIDS:* 130,000

## Literacy rate

*Total population:* 97.1%

*Male:* 97.1%

*Female:* 97.1%

## Life expectancy: 74 years

*Male:* 71 years

*Female:* 78 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 2.5

**Population below poverty line:** 38.5%



“The mercy mission spread throughout the world through daring women willing to respond to need in various countries.

For over 150 years, the call was to move the founding spirit of Catherine to all parts of the world to address whatever the most significant needs might be.”

(MIA Visioning Statement)



# Australia



The first Sisters of Mercy to go to Australia – Ursula Frayne and her five companions – settled in Perth in 1846. Subsequently, many other groups followed, making foundations throughout this vast country. Today there are 17 congregations, an autonomous region in Papua New Guinea and a small

foundation in Pakistan. All these constitute the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia (formed in 1981) which is currently engaged in a process of reconfiguring.

Over the decades since 1846, the Sisters, with their many partners in ministry, have worked with dedication and 'ground-breaking' determination, enlivening the tradition of service entrusted to them by Catherine McAuley in such areas as education, health and aged care, pastoral support, welfare and advocacy. Always their intention has been twofold: to serve people, preferably the poor and dispossessed, according to their need and potential, in the best and most effective ways; and to shine Gospel light on dehumanising structures, while redirecting unjust attitudes and practices – among themselves, within the Church and the wider society – to the 'principal path' of God's Mercy.



**Area:** 7,686,850 sq km

**Population:** 20,264,082

**Growth rate:** .85%

**Capital city:** Canberra

**Population of capital:** 373,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** Caucasian

92%, Asian 7%, aboriginal and other 1%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** English 79.1%, Chinese 2.1%, Italian 1.9%, other 11.15%, unspecified 5.8%.

**Religions (in percentages):** Christian 74% (Roman Catholic 26.4%, Anglican 20.5%, other Christian 27.1%). Buddhist, Muslim, Confucian and other (26%)

**Government:** Parliamentary monarchy. Michael Jeffery, Governor General, appointed by Queen Elizabeth II of England in August 2003. John Howard, Prime Minister (since March 1996, re-elected in 1998 and 2001).

**President:** N/A

## Economic profile (in US dollars)

*GDP:* \$368.8 billion

*World GDP ranking:* 16th

*GDP per person:* \$21,319

*Annual growth:* 3.5%

*Inflation:* 2.3%

*Major industries:* mining, industrial and transportation equipment, food processing, chemicals, steel

*Major trading partners:* Japan, South Korea, China, New Zealand, US, EU

*External debt:* \$506.6

## AIDS/HIV statistics

*Adult prevalence rate:* 0.1%

*People living with AIDS/HIV:* 14,000

## Literacy rate

*Total population:* 99% *Male:* 99% *Female:* 99%

**Life expectancy:** 80.5 years *Male:* 77.64 years *Female:* 83.52 years

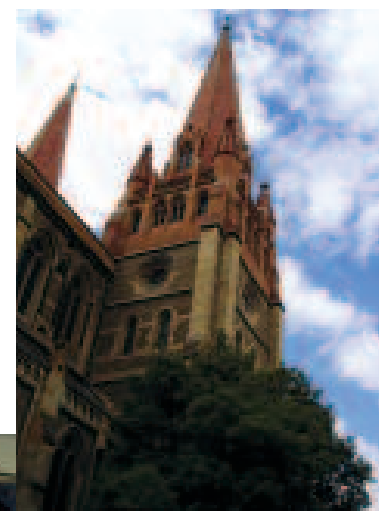


**Average number of children per woman:** 1.7

**Population below poverty line:** March 2005: a new report from the United Nations says that close to one in seven Australian children live in poverty. It is better than a decade ago, but still disturbingly high. And it is a trend that is being seen in many wealthy countries.)

(While Australia has enjoyed economic growth and declining unemployment for most of the past decade, that prosperity does not appear to have flowed down to many of those at the bottom of the economic tree.)

A new report commissioned by the Smith family has concluded that there are nearly 2.5 million Australians living in poverty, which it defined as a weekly income of \$416 for a family of four or \$225 for an individual, and that poverty levels have increased over the past 10 years. The report also found that while single mothers were the face of poverty in the 80s, after the 90s the single unemployed male is now more at risk of being poor than his female counterpart.





# Bahamas

*Am I are we willing to be influenced by, affected by, those who are poor, oppressed, marginalized, especially women and children?*



The Sisters of Mercy went to the Bahamas in 1968, where they founded a mission to provide religious education, social work and visitation of the poor. They also provided a free clinic, which was available to all people on the island. Today, one Sister of Mercy works on the mission on Andros Island. She is the Administrator of St Benedict's Church and, as there is no resident priest, she offers pastoral care to the people of the island. She also teaches Religious Education and visits parishioners.

**Area:** 13,880 sq km

**Population:** 303,770

note: estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected (July 2006 est.)

**Growth rate:** 1.7%

**Capital city:** Nassau (on New Providence Island)

**Population of capital:** 222,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** black 85%, white 12%, Asian and Hispanic 3%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** English (official) and Creole

**Religions (in percentages):** Baptist 35.4%, Anglican 15.1%, Roman Catholic 13.5%, Pentecostal 8.1%, Church of God 4.8%, Methodist 4.2%, other Christian 15.2%, none or unspecified 2.9%, other 0.8% (2000 census)

**Government:** Independent state within the British Commonwealth. Queen Elizabeth II of England is Head of State, represented by Dame Ivy Dumont since 2001. Perry Christie, Prime Minister (since May 2002). The Legislature has two chambers: a 16-member Senate and a 40-member Assembly.

**President:** N/A

## Economic profile (in US dollars)

**GDP:** \$3.2 Billion  
**World GDP ranking:** 137th  
**GDP per person:** \$16,554  
**Annual growth:** 4.5%  
**Inflation:** 1.8%  
**Major industries:** Tourism, finance  
**Major trading partners:** US, UK, Denmark, Italy, Japan, Switzerland  
**External debt:** \$342.6 million

## AIDS/HIV statistics

**Adult prevalence rate:** 3.3%  
**People living with HIV/AIDS:** 5,600

## Literacy rate:

**Total population:** 95%  
**Male:** 95%  
**Female:** 96%

## Life expectancy:

**Male:** 64 years  
**Female:** 70 years

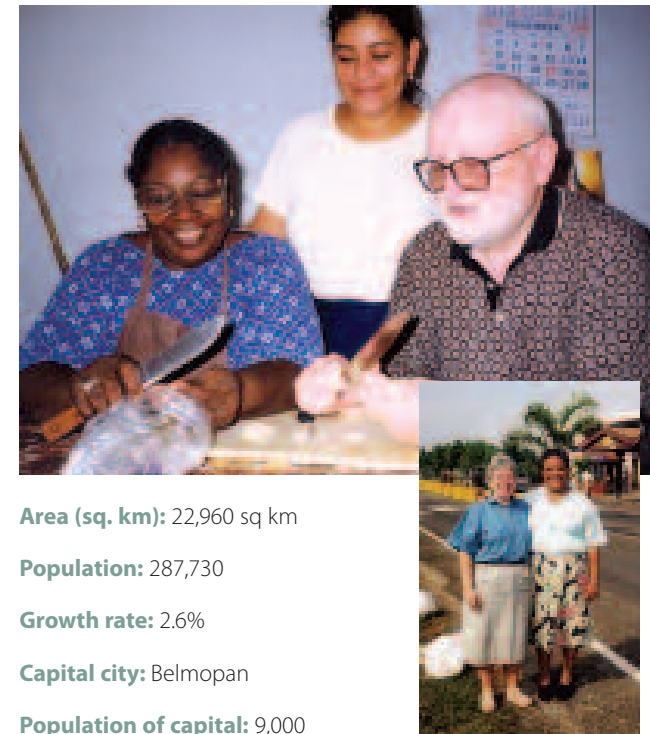
## Average number of children per woman: 2.3

## Population below poverty line: 9.3%



# Belize

Mother Austin Carroll and six Sisters of Mercy arrived at the harbour of Belize on 20 January 1883, to establish the first Mercy foundation in Central America and the Caribbean. The Sisters started the English school and the Spanish school, which would later grow into elementary and secondary schools. They also opened a clinic for the aged poor which caters for the health and human needs of the poor and street people, offering out-patient care and health education and palliative care. The Sisters of Mercy in Belize do social outreach to the indigenous people within the Toledo area and provide mobile services to remote villages.



**Area (sq. km):** 22,960 sq km

**Population:** 287,730

**Growth rate:** 2.6%

**Capital city:** Belmopan

**Population of capital:** 9,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** Mestizo 48.7%, Creole 24.9%, Maya 10.6%, Garifuna 6.1%, other 9.7%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** English (official); common language is Creole. Spanish, Quiché, Yucatán Mayan and Garifuna are also spoken.

**Religions (in percentages):** Roman Catholic 60%, Anglican, Methodist, Seventh-Day Adventist, Pentecostal, Jehovah's Witness.

**Government:** Parliamentary monarchy. Colville Young, Governor General, appointed by Queen Elizabeth II of England in November 1993. Said Wilbert Musa, Prime Minister (since August 1998, re-elected in 2003). Legislative power lies with the House of

Representatives, which has 29 members and is elected by universal suffrage, and a 9-member Senate appointed by the Governor General.

**President:** N/A

## Economic profile (in US dollars)

**GDP:** \$1.778 billion  
**World GDP ranking:** 149th  
**GDP per person:** \$5,907  
**Annual growth:** 3.7%  
**Inflation:** 0.3%  
**Major industries:** clothing manufacture, food processing, tourism, construction  
**Major trading partners:** US, UK, Mexico, Canada, EU  
**External debt:** \$708 million

## AIDS/HIV statistics

**Adult prevalence rate:** 2.4%  
**People living with HIV/AIDS:** 3,600

## Literacy rate

**Total population:** 93%  
**Male:** 93%  
**Female:** 93%

## Life expectancy:

**Male:** 67 years  
**Female:** 68 years

## Average number of children per woman: 3.2

## Population below poverty line: 33%



“We are instruments in the hands of God and must never act as if we were more.”







# Bolivia

The Sisters of Mercy went to Bolivia in 1994 and work alongside Maryknoll Community of Sisters. The Sisters of Mercy are involved in pastoral work, especially in women's literacy and religious formation. The Sisters work and minister in the Cochabamba district of Bolivia.

**Area:** 1,098,580 sq km

**Population:** 8,989,046 (July 2006 est.)

**Growth rate:** 2.2%

**Capital city:** Sucre is the constitutional capital and seat of the judiciary. La Paz functions as the seat of the Government.

**Population of Sucre:** 212,000

**Population of La Paz:** 1,477,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** Quechua 30%, mestizo (mixed white and Amerindian ancestry) 30%, Aymara 25%, white 15%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** Spanish, Quechua and Aymara (all official). More than half the population speaks native languages (including Guarani); there are 39 ethnic-linguistic groups.

**Religions (in percentages):** Roman Catholic 95%, Evangelical Methodist 5%

**Government:** Republic

**President:** Carlos Mesa Gisbert, President and Head of the Government (since 17 October 2003)

## Economic profile (in US dollars)

**GDP:** \$7.9 billion

**World GDP ranking:** 96th

**GDP per person:** \$1,032

**Annual growth:** 2.5%

**Inflation:** 2.0%

**Major industries:** mining, smelting, petroleum, food and beverages, tobacco, handicrafts, clothing

**Major trading partners:** Brazil, US, Venezuela, Peru, Argentina, Colombia, Chile, China, Japan

**External debt:** \$4,682 million

## AIDS/HIV statistics

**Adult prevalence rate:** 0.1%

**People living with HIV/AIDS:** 4,900

## Literacy rate

**Total population:** 85%

**Male:** 92%

**Female:** 79%

## Life expectancy:

**Male:** 62 years

**Female:** 66 years

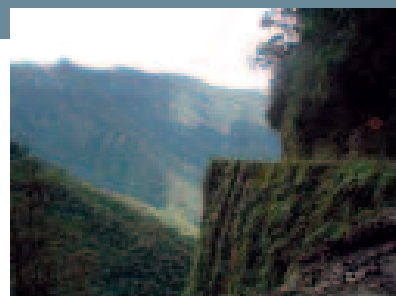
**Average number of children per woman:** 3.9

**Population below poverty line:** 64%



*“As the 21st century began, MIA saw a need once again to re-focus its vision in light of changing realities in the member congregations and in the world.”*

(MIA Visioning Statement)



# Brazil



The Sisters of Mercy went to Brazil in 1981. Currently there are three Sisters working in the country. Their ministry is with the poorest of the poor in the northeast of the country. For the first twelve years or so, they worked with the basic Christian community movement. Now they have moved to work

in the developmental area – training, working with women at risk, trying to reduce child mortality and trying to provide employment initiatives for many of the landless peoples. The Sisters live and work in the State of Paraiba, the second poorest state in the country. Here over 47 per cent of the people live in misery – over a quarter of the state's 3.3 million residents have no income.



Each year, Paraiba experiences severe drought conditions which have worsened in recent years following El Niño and La Niña. Rural farmers are constantly seeking refuge in larger cities like Joao Pessoa and Campina Grande.

**Area:** 8,547,400 sq km

**Population:** 188,078,227

*note:* Brazil conducted a census in August 2000, which reported a population of 169,799,170; that figure was about 3.3% lower than projections by the US Census Bureau, and is close to the implied underenumeration of 4.6% for the 1991 census; estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected (July 2006 est.)

**Growth rate:** 1.6%

**Capital city:** Brasilia

**Population of capital:** 3,099,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** white 53.7%, mulatto (mixed white and black) 38.5%, black 6.2%, other (includes Japanese, Arab, Amerindian) 0.9%, unspecified 0.7%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** Portuguese (official and predominant), many Indian languages such as Bariwa and Guajajára, Spanish, English, French

**Religions (in percentages):** Roman Catholic 73.6%, Protestant 15.4%, Spiritualist 1.3%, Bantu/Voodoo 0.3%, other 1.8%, unspecified 0.2%, none 7.4%

**Government:** Federal republic

**President:** Luis Inacio (Lula) da Silva (since 2003)

## Economic profile (in US dollars)

**GDP:** \$509 billion

**World GDP ranking:** 9th

**GDP per person:** \$7,516

**Annual growth:** 1.5 %

**Inflation:** 8.5 %

**Major industries:** textiles, shoes, chemicals, cement, lumber, iron ore, tin, steel, aircraft, motor vehicles and parts, other machinery and equipment

**Major trading partners:** US, Argentina, Netherlands, China, Germany, Mexico, Nigeria, Japan

**External debt:** \$226,362 million

## AIDS/HIV statistics

**Adult prevalence rate:** 0.7%

**People living with HIV/AIDS:** 660,000

## Literacy rate

**Total population:** 87%

**Male:** 87%

**Female:** 87%

## Life expectancy:

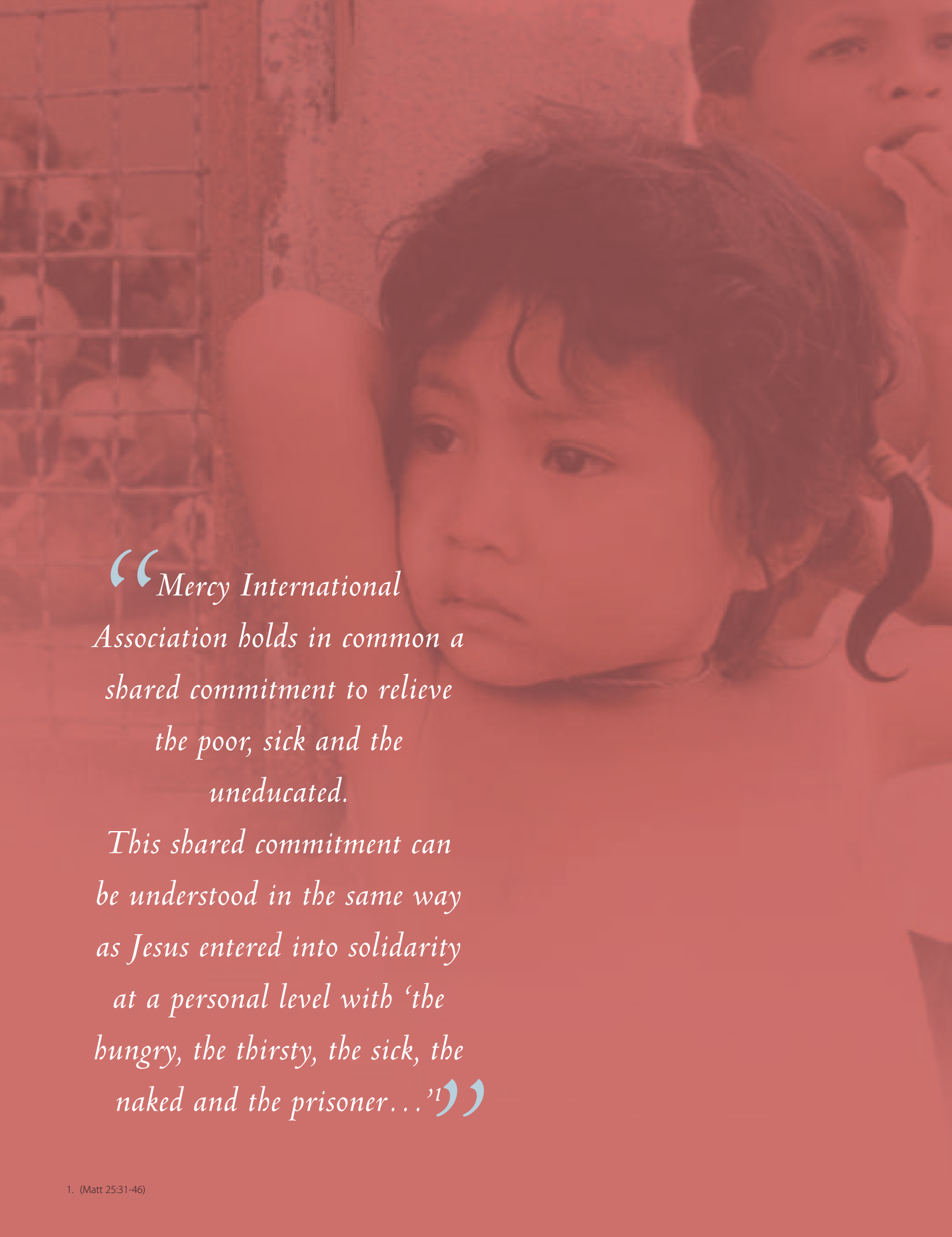
**Male:** 64 years

**Female:** 73 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 2.2

**Population below poverty line:** 22%



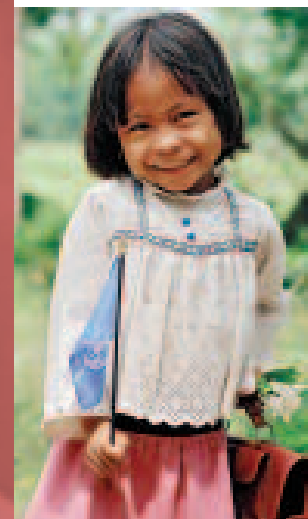


“Mercy International Association holds in common a shared commitment to relieve the poor, sick and the uneducated. This shared commitment can be understood in the same way as Jesus entered into solidarity at a personal level with ‘the hungry, the thirsty, the sick, the naked and the prisoner...’”

1. (Matt 25:31-46)



# Cambodia



In 1987, a Sister of Mercy volunteered for the Mercy Refugee service and she began work in the refugee camps for Cambodian and Vietnamese refugees on the Thai-Cambodian border. In 1989, it was discerned that to be effective advocates for peace and a just solution to the political and social situation, people needed to accompany refugees in the camps until they were able to return home.

When the refugees returned to Cambodia, the team accompanying them began with vocational training and outreach to Cambodian people who had been injured

by landmines and the effects of war, and went on to begin an integrated rural development project. The team tries to alleviate poverty in rural communities in the post-war era by providing education to refugees, and is involved in the landmine campaign. Today, more than 100 Cambodian people work with the team.

**Area:** 181,040 sq km

**Population:** 13,881,427

note: estimates for this country take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected (July 2006 est.)

**Growth rate:** 3.2%

**Capital city:** Phnom Penh (Phnum Pénh)

**Population of capital:** 1,157,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** Khmer 90%, Vietnamese 5%, Chinese 1%, other 4%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** Khmer (official) 95%, French, English

**Religions (in percentages):** Theravada Buddhist 95%, other 5%

**Government:** Parliamentary monarchy. King Norodom Sihanouk (since September 1993). Executive Power held by Samdech Hun Sen, Prime Minister (since November 1998). Legislature has two chambers: 122-member National Assembly; 61-member Senate.

**President:** N/A

## Economic profile (in US dollars)

GDP: \$3.41 billion

World GDP ranking: 85th

GDP per person: \$1,649

Annual growth: 4.5%

Inflation: 3.1%

Major industries: tourism, clothing, rice milling, fishing, wood and wood products, rubber, cement, gem mining, textiles

Major trading partners: Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore, US, Hong Kong, Taiwan

External debt: \$2,704 million

## AIDS/HIV statistics

Adult prevalence rate: 2.6%

People living with HIV/AIDS: 170,000

**Literacy rate:** Total population: 68% Male: 80% Female: 57%

**Life expectancy:** 57 years Male: 55 years Female: 59 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 4.8

**Population below poverty line:** 40%





# Canada



In 1840, Bishop Fleming, on one of his many trips from Newfoundland to Ireland, visited Catherine McAuley and presented her with a request for a community of Sisters for his island mission. His plans found a ready response in the foundress, and the annals of the Sisters of Mercy record that she herself 'would gladly have been the first Sister of Mercy to set foot' in Newfoundland. Meanwhile, Bishop Fleming made arrangements for Frances Creedon, an Irish girl who had lived in Newfoundland for several years, to make her novitiate with Catherine McAuley and return to Newfoundland with two companions to found a Convent of Mercy.

In May 1842, Bishop Fleming's request was granted as Frances Creedon, Ursula Frayne and Rose Lynch began their Atlantic crossing on the *Sir Walter Scott*. They arrived in St John's on 3 June, and stayed at 'Carpasia', Bishop Fleming's residence, until a convent could be built for them. Their first months in their new mission were spent visiting the sick and the poor in their homes.

It was not until May 1843 that the Sisters opened Our Lady of Mercy School on Military Road, St John's, Newfoundland. The Sisters of Mercy in Newfoundland work in education and in hospitals. They also work in shelters and in soup kitchens and as advocates for an equitable share of resources for the peoples of Newfoundland.

**Area:** 9,970,610 sq km  
**Population:** 31,972,000  
**Growth rate:** 1.2%  
**Capital city:** Ottawa

**Population of capital:** 1,093,000

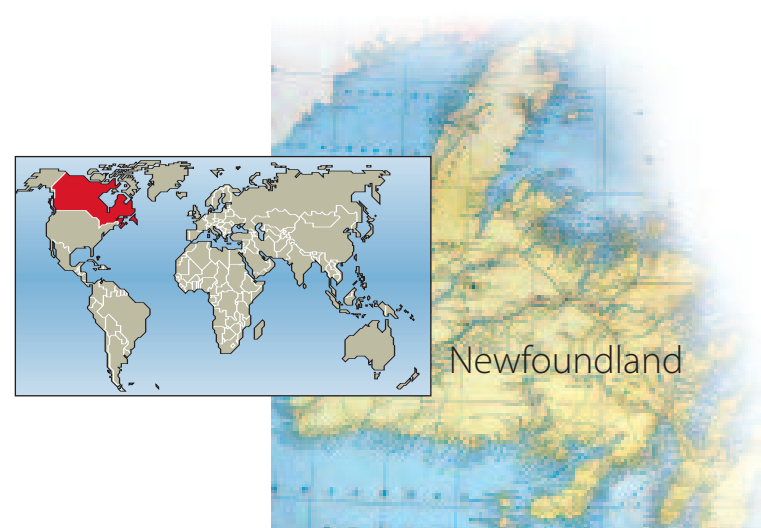
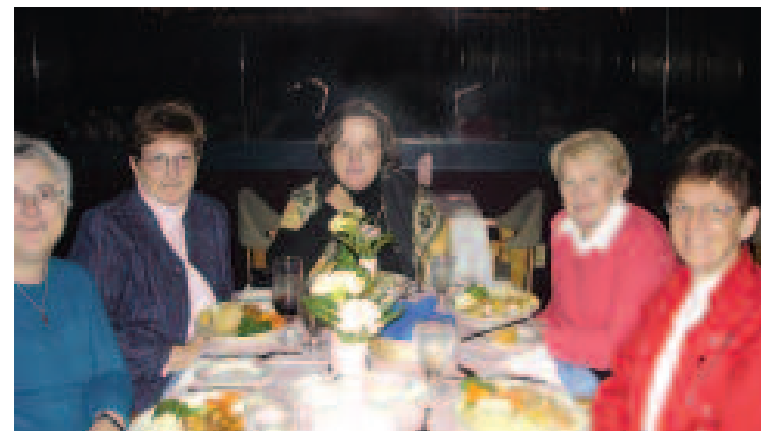
**Ethnicity of people in percentages:** British Isles origin 28%, French origin 23%, other European 15%, Amerindian 2%, other, mostly Asian, African, Arab 6%, mixed background 26%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** English and French (both official); 13% of the population is bilingual, 67% speak only English, 18% only French, and 2% speak other languages (Italian, German, Ukrainian and indigenous languages).

**Religions (in percentages):** Roman Catholic 45.7%; Protestant 36.3%. There are also Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus; 12.4% of the population considers itself non-religious.

**Government:** Parliamentary monarchy and a federation of ten provinces. Adrienne Bing Chee Clarkson, Governor General, appointed by Queen Elizabeth II of England in 1999. Paul Martin, Prime Minister and Head of Government (since December 2003). Senate has 104 members and the House of Commons 301.

**President:** N/A



## Economic profile (in US dollars)

**GDP:** \$694.5 billion  
**World GDP ranking:** 13th  
**GDP per person:** \$28,699  
**Annual growth:** 3.3%  
**Inflation:** 1.1%  
**Major industries:** transportation equipment, chemicals, processed and unprocessed minerals, food products, wood and paper products, fish products, petroleum and natural gas  
**Major trading partners:** US, Japan, UK, China, Mexico  
**External debt:** N/A

## AIDS/HIV statistics

**Adult prevalence rate:** 0.3%  
**People living with HIV/AIDS:** 56,000

**Literacy rate:** Total population: 99% Male: 99% Female: 99%

**Life expectancy:** 79 years Male: 77 years Female: 82 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 1.5

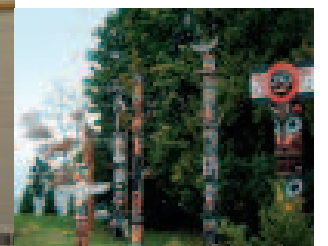
**Population below poverty line:** 15.9%

note: this figure is the Low Income Cut-Off (LICO), a calculation that results in higher figures than found in many comparable economies; Canada does not have an official poverty line (2003).



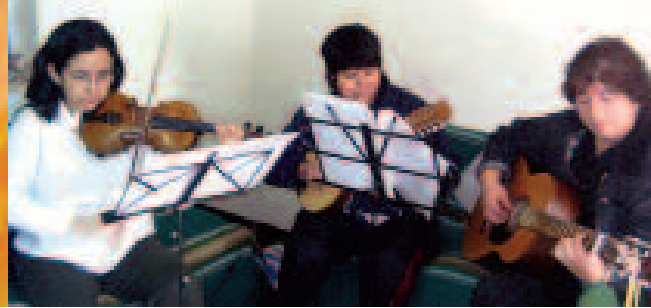
“We urgently need a shared vision of basic values to provide an ethical foundation for the emerging world community.”

(Kofi Annan)

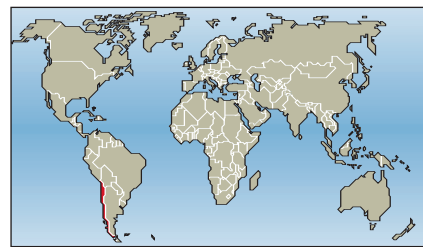




# Chile



The Sisters of Mercy went to Chile in 1965 from the regional community of Rochester, New York. Today, there are 12 Sisters from four different countries working in Chile. Sisters from Ireland, New Zealand, the US and Chile work together in ministry. The Sisters are involved in parish ministry, pastoral care of the sick, education, social work, comprehensive health care, reflexology and workshops in crafts, sewing and personal improvement.



**Area:** 756,630 sq km  
**Population:** 16,185,450  
**Growth rate:** 1.6%  
**Capital city:** Santiago  
**Population of capital:** 5,478,000  
**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** white (mostly Spanish and Italian) 97%; mestizo, Amerindian, other 3%



**Languages spoken and official language(s):** Spanish (official), Mapudungun (Mapuche language), Rapa nui and other minority languages.  
**Religions (in percentages):** Roman Catholic 77%, Protestant 13%

**Government:** Legislature has two chambers: the National Congress is formed by the Chamber of Deputies, with 117 members, and the Senate, with 48 members.

**President:** Ricardo Lagos (since March 2000)

### Economic profile (in US dollars)

**GDP:** \$66.45 billion  
**World GDP ranking:** 44th  
**GDP per person:** \$9,561  
**Annual growth:** 2.1%  
**Inflation:** 2.6%  
**Major industries:** copper, other minerals, foodstuffs, fish processing, iron and steel, wood and wood products, transport equipment, cement, textiles, wine  
**Major trading partners:** US, Japan, Germany, UK  
**External debt:** \$38,360 million

### AIDS/HIV statistics

**Adult prevalence rate:** 0.3%  
**People living with HIV/AIDS:** 26,000

### Literacy rate

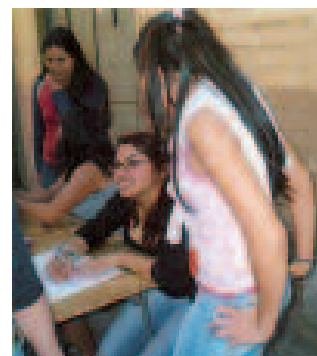
**Total population:** 96%  
**Male:** 96%  
**Female:** 96%

### Life expectancy: 76 years

**Male:** 73 years  
**Female:** 79 years

### Average number of children per woman: 2.4

### Population below poverty line: 18.2%



# East Timor

“Fundamental changes are needed in our values, institutions and ways of living. We must realize that when basic needs have been met, human development is primarily about being more, not having more.”

(Millennium Campaign)

The Sisters of Mercy first went to East Timor to work on a Mercy Refugee Service/Jesuit Refugee Service project from 2000 to 2003. At present, two Sisters of the Ballarat East Congregation in East Timor work in education and community development. Mercy Works is currently undertaking a feasibility study for another placement.

**Area:** 14,870 sq km  
**Population:** 1,062,777  
note: other estimates range as low as 800,000 (July 2006 est.)  
**Growth rate:** 2.08% (2006 est.)  
**Capital city:** Dili  
**Population of capital:** 49,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian), Papuan, small Chinese minority (no percentages available)

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** Tetum (official), Portuguese (official), Indonesian, English; there are also about 16 indigenous languages of which Tetum, Galole, Mambae and Kemak are spoken by significant numbers of people.

**Religions (in percentages):** Most follow traditional practices. Roman Catholic 30%

**Government:** Republic

**President:** Xanana Gusmão (since 2002)

### Economic profile

(in US dollars)  
**GDP:** \$370 million  
**World GDP ranking:** 210  
**GDP per person:** \$400  
**Annual growth:** 1.0%  
**Inflation:** 4.0%  
**Major industries:** printing, soap manufacturing, handicrafts, woven cloth  
**Major trading partners:** Indonesia  
**External debt:** N/A

**AIDS/HIV statistics:** N/A

### Literacy rate

**Total population:** 58%  
**Male:** N/A  
**Female:** N/A

### Life expectancy: 66.26 years

**Male:** 63.96 years  
**Female:** 68.67 years (2006 est.)

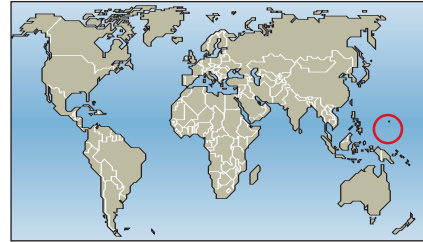
### Average number of children per woman: 3.9

### Population below poverty line: 42%





# Federated States of Micronesia



The Sisters of Mercy went to Chuuk in 1996 to work in the Diocesan Development Centre and teach at Saramen Chuuk. The Sisters also assist in many other ministries, including visiting the sick at home, in hospital and in prison. They also have a women's group called WEM – Women's Empowerment Movement – for the local women in Chuuk, and run a Come and See programme for young women interested in becoming Sisters. Today, the Sisters continue to work in education and pastoral care.

**Area:** 700 sq km

**Population:** 111,465

**Growth rate:** 1.5 %

**Capital city:** Palikir, on the island of Pohnpei

**Population of capital:** 7,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** main ethnic groups are Trukese (41%) and Pohnpeian (26%), both Micronesian

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** English (official), eight officially recognized local languages (including Trukese, Pohnpeian, Yapese, and Kosrean), a number of other dialects

**Religions:** Christianity is the predominant religion, with the Kosraeans, Pohnpeians and Trukese being mostly Protestant and the Yapese mainly Roman Catholic

**Government:** Legislature, single-chamber with 14 members (10 on two-year terms, four on four-year terms). There are no political parties.

**President:** Joseph Urusemal (since May 2003)

## Economic profile (in US dollars)

**GDP:** \$1.92 billion  
**World GDP ranking:** 213th  
**GDP per person:** \$3,900  
**Annual growth:** 1.0%

**Inflation:** 1.0%  
**Major industries:** tourism, construction; fish processing, specialized aquaculture; craft items from shell, wood, and pearls  
**Major trading partners:** US, Japan, Guam  
**External debt:** \$66.5 million

**AIDS/HIV statistics:** N/A

## Literacy rate

**Total population:** 67%  
**Male:** 66%  
**Female:** 67%

**Life expectancy:** 69 years  
**Male:** 68 years  
**Female:** 69 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 3.8

**Population below poverty line:** 26.7%



# France



The Sisters of Mercy went to France in 1998. One Sister from Ireland currently works and lives in Lourdes, where her ministry is to offer Pastoral Care at Our Lady's Shrine. Other Sisters of Mercy have been involved in this ministry on a short-term basis for many years.

**Area:** 551,500 sq km

**Population:** 60,711,000

**Growth rate:** 0.35%

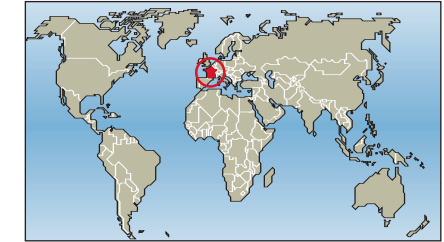
**Capital city:** Paris

**Population of capital:** 9,794,000

**Ethnicity of people:** Celtic and Latin with Teutonic, Slavic, North African, Indochinese, Basque minorities

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** French (official and predominant language). There are also regional languages: Breton in Brittany, a German dialect in Alsace and Lorraine, Flemish in the northeast, Catalan and Basque in the southwest, Provençal in the south-east, Occitan in the central south, Corsican on the island of Corsica. Immigrants speak their own languages, mainly Portuguese, Arab, Berber, Spanish, Italian and African languages.

**Religions (in percentages):** Roman Catholic 81.4%; Muslim 6.8% (practised mostly by North African and West African immigrants); Protestant 2%; Jewish 1%



**Government:** Republic. Jean-Pierre Raffarin, Prime Minister (since May 2002). Parliament has two chambers: the National Assembly, with 577 members, and the Senate, with 321 members.

**President:** Jacques Chirac (since May 1995, re-elected in 2002)

## Economic profile (in US dollars)

**GDP:** \$1.32 trillion  
**World GDP ranking:** 7th  
**GDP per person:** \$26,151  
**Annual growth:** 1.0%  
**Inflation:** 1.3%  
**Major industries:** machinery, chemicals, car manufacture, metallurgy, aircraft, electronics; textiles, food processing; tourism  
**Major trading partners:** Brazil, Chile, US, China, Spain, Germany  
**External debt:** N/A

## AIDS/HIV statistics

**Adult prevalence rate:** 0.4%  
**People living with HIV/AIDS:** 120,000

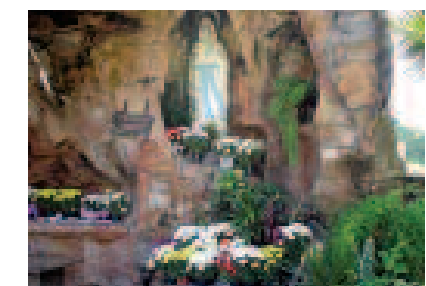
## Literacy rate

**Total population:** 99%  
**Male:** 99%  
**Female:** 99%

**Life expectancy:** 79 years  
**Male:** 75 years  
**Female:** 83 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 1.9

**Population below poverty line:** 6.5%





# Ghana



The Sisters of Mercy went to Ghana in 1991 and 1992. From 1993 to 1998, they worked in the university. In September 1998, they began working in the healing ministry with Cardinal Peter Turkson, Archbishop of Cape Coast. They have at least 45 funded projects, designed to help women and children (sometimes men) disabled in body, mind or spirit. Some of the visible results are Mercy Centre Brafo-Yaw, and a Maternity Centre and a Fistula Hospital in Mankessim. All of the work is with those who are very poor and it is made possible through partnering with doctors and nurses from throughout the world, who offer short-term services.

**Area:** 238,540 sq km

**Population:** 22,409,572

note: estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected (July 2006 est.)



**Growth rate:** 2.6%

**Capital city:** Accra

**Population of capital:** 1,847,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** African 98.5% (major tribes: Akan 44%, Moshi-Dagomba 16%, Ewe 13%, Ga 8%, Gurma 3%, Yoruba 1%), European and other 1.5%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** English (official); Ga is the main local language; Fanti, Hausa, Fantéewe, Gaandanhe, Akan, Dagbandim and Mamprussi are also spoken.

**Religions (in percentages):** Christian 50%, traditional religions 32%, Muslim 13%

**Government:** Constitutional democracy

**President:** John Agyekum Kufuor (since 2001)

## Economic profile (in US dollars)

*GDP:* \$5.3 billion

*World GDP ranking:* 71st

*GDP per person:* \$2,050

*Annual growth:* 4.5%

*Inflation:* 20.2%

*Major industries:* mining, lumbering, light manufacturing, aluminium smelting, food processing, cement, small commercial shipbuilding

*Major trading partners:* Netherlands, UK, France, US, Belgium, Germany, Japan, Nigeria, China

*External debt:* \$6,759 million

## AIDS/HIV statistics

Adult prevalence rate: 3.1% People living with HIV/AIDS: 350,000

**Literacy rate:** Total population: 72% Male: 80% Female: 63%

**Life expectancy:** 58 years Male: 56 years Female: 59 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 4.2

**Population below poverty line:** 31.4%



# Guam

The Sisters of Mercy first went to Guam in November 1946. Sisters Mary Inez Underwood, Mary Louise Wiesenforth and Mary Annette McBennett travelled to Guam at the invitation of Bishop Appollinaris Baumgartner, to establish Catholic education and local religious communities. Within a year, they had received 10 young women and had 10 more waiting. Today, the Sisters of Mercy serve in a variety of outreach and pastoral capacities; education is their primary ministry. The Sisters also run a shelter for victims of domestic and child abuse.



**Area:** 550 sq km

**Population:** 171,019 (July 2006 est.)

**Growth rate:** 1.8%

**Capital city:** Agana

**Population of capital:** 140,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** Chamorro 37.1%, Filipino 26.3%, other Pacific islander 11.3%, white 6.9%, other Asian 6.3%, other ethnic origin or race 2.3%, mixed 9.8%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** English (official), Chamorro (a dialect derived from Indonesian), Japanese.

**Religions (in percentages):** Roman Catholic 98%

**Government:** Felix P.P. Camacho, Governor (since January 2003). His office reports to the US Interior Department and has less autonomy than the local military commander, as one-third of the island is under control of the US Navy and Air Force. Although Guamanians formally possess US citizenship, they have no

representation in the US Congress nor do they participate in the presidential elections. Parliament: The Guam Legislature, with 15 members.

**President:** N/A

## Economic profile (in US dollars)

*GDP:* \$2.5 billion

*World GDP ranking:* 180th

*GDP per person:* \$15,000

*Annual growth:* N/A

*Inflation:* 2.5%

*Major industries:* US military, tourism, construction, trans-shipment services, concrete products, printing and publishing, food processing, textiles

*Major trading partners:* Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, Philippines

*External debt:* N/A

**AIDS/HIV statistics:** N/A

## Literacy rate

Total population: 99%

Male: 99%

Female: 99%

## Life expectancy:

75 years

Male: 72 years

Female: 77 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 2.5

**Population below poverty line:** 23%





# Guatemala



The Sisters of Mercy went to Guatemala in 1973. They went to work in the village of Chiquimula where they found 153 families living with no water. The daily wage was less than \$1 per day. The first priority was to get water, and a village committee was formed. With the villagers, the Sisters set about laying a pipeline. Within 34 days, six miles of pipeline were laid. Today, there are 12 public taps in various parts of the village. Other Mercy projects in this area include the establishment of a health post, an agricultural co-op, a six-grade school and the potter's wheel programme which offers courses in farming, alternative education and health care.

**Area:** 108,890 sq km

**Population:** 12,978,000

**Growth rate:** 2.6%

**Capital city:** Guatemala City

**Population of capital:** 951,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** Mestizo (mixed Amerindian-Spanish – in local Spanish called Ladino) and European 59.4%, K'iche 9.1%, Kaqchikel 8.4%, Mam 7.9%, Q'eqchi 6.3%, other Mayan 8.6%, indigenous non-Mayan 0.2%, other 0.1%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** Spanish (official) but most of the population speak one of the 22 Maya dialects

**Religions (in percentages):** Mainly Roman Catholic. In recent years, a number of Protestant groups have appeared. The Mayan religion has also survived. (% N/A)

**Government:** Constitutional democratic republic

**President:** Oscar Berger Perdomo (since January 2004)



# Guyana



The Sisters of Mercy went to Guyana on 3 April 1894 as a foundation from England. In 1934, the foundation in Guyana became a part of the Scranton Province. Within eight days of their arrival, the Sisters of Mercy opened a school for girls of all races. In addition to education, early ministries included work among the Aboriginal Indians, running orphanages and hospitals and caring for leprosy patients.



In response to the increasing poverty and unemployment, the Sisters began to focus on social work and tried to meet the needs of the people in new and different ways. Today, the ministries of the Sisters of Mercy include health care, counselling, education, prayer and pastoral work and running an orphanage.

The greatest challenge the Sisters face today in Guyana, in addition to a lack of financial resources, is the shortage of human resources. There is a critical lack of registered nurses. Once nurses are trained, they are recruited to the US or the UK for better pay.

**Area:** 214,970 sq km

**Population:** 767,245

note: estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected (July 2006 est.)

**Growth rate:** 0.0%

**Capital city:** Georgetown

**Population of capital:** 231,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** East Indian 50%; black 36%; Amerindian 7%; white, Chinese, and mixed 7%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** English (official), Creole. Several indigenous languages are spoken, mainly belonging to Carib and Arawak linguistic groups. Hindi and Urdu are used in religious ceremonies.

**Religions (in percentages):** Protestant 34%; Roman Catholic 18%; Hindu 34%; Muslim 9%. Traditional religions are practised by Amerindian groups.

**Government:** Republic within the Commonwealth

**President:** Bharrat Jagdeo (since August 1999)

## Economic profile (in US dollars)

**GDP:** \$713 million

**World GDP ranking:** 145th

**GDP per person:** \$854

**Annual growth:** 0.3%

**Inflation:** 3.1%

**Major industries:** bauxite, sugar, rice milling, timber, textiles, gold mining

**Major trading partners:** Canada, US, UK, Portugal, Belgium, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Cuba

**External debt:** \$1,406 million

## AIDS/HIV statistics

**Adult prevalence rate:** 2.5%

**People living with HIV/AIDS:** 11,000

## Literacy rate

**Total population:** 99%

**Male:** 99%

**Female:** 98%

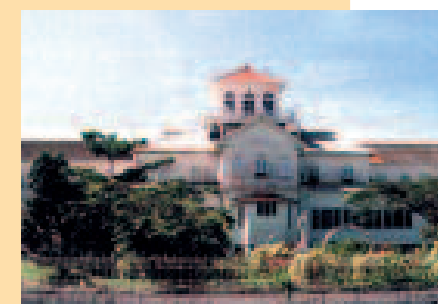
**Life expectancy:** 63 years

**Male:** 60 years

**Female:** 66 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 2.3

**Population below poverty line:** N/A



*“Changing government policies is possible with collaborative advocacy. How can we support and encourage those who have the gifts to challenge public policies to promote a more equitable and sustainable world?”*

(Millennium Campaign)



# Haiti



The Sisters of Mercy went to Haiti in 1991. At present, there is one Sister who works as the Director of the Norwich Mission House, and as Director of Hospice St Joseph, both in Port-au-Prince. She visits the sick, prays with them, and sits with them and their families when they are dying. She also accompanies the deceased and their family home after the death of their loved one.

The hospital is in the province and many people walk 3–4 hours to come to the clinic. The Sister also works with people with AIDS and has obtained a grant from PEPFAR (President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief). She also visits the elderly in a home for the aged and is responsible for booking immersion and medical groups, arranging transportation for them to get to Haiti, and supervising the staff in preparing for their visits.

**Area:** 27,750 sq km

**Population:** 8,308,500

**Growth rate:** 2.3%

**Capital city:** Port-au-Prince

**Population of capital:** 1,277,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** black 95%, mulatto and white 5%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** French, Creole (both official)



**Religions (in percentages):** Roman Catholic 80%, Protestant 16% (Baptist 10%, Pentecostal 4%, Adventist 1%, other 1%), none 1%, other 3% (Note: roughly half of the population practises Voodoo)

**Government:** Elected government

**President:** An armed rebellion led to the departure of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in February 2004. An interim government took office to organize new elections under the auspices of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

## Economic profile (in US dollars)

*GDP:* \$3.62 billion

*World GDP ranking:* 114th

*GDP per person:* \$496

*Annual growth:* 2%

*Inflation:* 15.7%

*Major industries:* sugar refining, flour milling, textiles, cement, light assembly industries based on imported parts

*Major trading partners:* US, Dominican Republic, Canada

*External debt:* \$1.313 billion

## AIDS/HIV statistics

*Adult prevalence rate:* 5.6%

*People living with HIV/AIDS:* 280,000

## Literacy rate

*Total population:* 52.9%

*Male:* 54.8%

*Female:* 51.2%

## Life expectancy: 53 years

*Male:* 51 years

*Female:* 55 years

## Average number of children per woman: 4.9

## Population below poverty line: 80%



# Honduras



The Sisters of Mercy went to Honduras in 1959. They arrived in La Ceiba, Honduras, from Belize and Providence, Rhode Island, in January of that year. They went in response to an invitation from the Medical Director of D'Antoni Hospital to open a School of Professional Nursing. Within the year, other Sisters arrived to open a kindergarten and a high school for young women. The high school, Maria Regina, is the only Mercy work still in La Ceiba.

At present, there are nine Sisters in Honduras. In the mid-1990s, two Honduran sisters, Masbely Del Cid and Sandra Hernandez, founded *Casa Corazon*, a home for children orphaned by HIV/AIDS. Today, there are 33 children living there. In addition, the Sisters work in parish and are responsible for catechesis training and the training of delegates of the Word in the mountains above Puerto Cortes, a major Central American port. The Sisters also run several economic development projects, including a rural ministry, which offers literacy courses and a natural medicine pharmacy.

**Area:** 112,090 sq km

**Population:** 767,245

*note:* estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected (July 2006 est.)

**Growth rate:** 2.9%

**Capital city:** Tegucigalpa

**Population of capital:** 1,007,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** mestizo (mixed Amerindian and European) 90%, Amerindian 7%, black 2%, white 1%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** Spanish (official), Garifuna, various indigenous languages (such as Lenca and Miskito); a small number of people speak English



**Religions (in percentages):** Roman Catholic 85%; Protestant 10%; other 5%

**Government:** Democratic constitutional republic

**President:** Ricardo Maduro (since January 2002)

## Economic profile (in US dollars)

*GDP:* \$6.4 billion

*World GDP ranking:* 99th

*GDP per person:* \$856

*Annual growth:* 2.9%

*Inflation:* 7.3%

*Major industries:* sugar, coffee, textiles, clothing, wood products

*Major trading partners:* US, El Salvador, Germany, Guatemala

*External debt:* \$5,051 million

## AIDS/HIV statistics

*Adult prevalence rate:* 1.8%

*People living with HIV/AIDS:* 63,000

## Literacy rate

*Total population:* 75% *Male:* 75% *Female:* 75%

**Life expectancy:** 69 years *Male:* 66 years *Female:* 71 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 3.8

**Population below poverty line:** 53%



# “Catherine’s Embrace of Cultural Diversity”

*If I were to summarize in the broadest terms Catherine McAuley’s embrace of cultural diversity and her legacy of hospitality to strangers, I would have to say that:*

- *She did not narrowly define the love of God or the unity to which we and our neighbours in the world are called.*
- *She did not misname differences or see cultural variations as obstacles to that unity.*
- *She did not use adversarial language to describe these differences.*
- *She did not cling to her own distinctiveness or her own personal preferences or non-essential customs.*

*Rather:*

- *She emptied herself of the comfort of her former way of life.*
- *She extended her affectionate embrace to otherness.*
- *She opened her door to strangers.*
- *She welcomed them.*
- *And she followed, as best she could, the example of Christ, who became obedient to God’s wide and merciful love of all humankind.”*

(Patricia Smith)



## India



The Sisters of Mercy began work in Calcutta, India, in 2001. One Sister of Mercy from the Southern Province of the Congregation began working as a volunteer with the HOPE Foundation in Calcutta. This Irish foundation was established by Maureen Forrest, who in the mid-90s was moved by the awful suffering of people in Kolkata and decided to do something about it.



The HOPE foundation is currently responsible for running fifty-five projects in Calcutta in partnership with eleven Indian NGOs. The main focus of the Foundation is the provision of education, health care, counselling, vocational training and working with street children. Through its Solidarity Fund, the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy has established a bursary in the form of a series of ten scholarships to cover the cost of educating ten girls associated with the HOPE Foundation home.

**Area:** 3,287,260 sq. km

**Population:** 1,096,917,184

**Growth rate:** 1.9%

**Capital city:** New Delhi

**Population of capital:** 14,146,000

**Ethnicity of people in percentages:** Indo-Aryan 72%, Dravidian 25%, other 3%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** 400 registered languages, of which 18 are officially recognized, including Hindi, Bengali, Tamil or Urdu. English is a lingua franca, widely used for administrative purposes. There are 16 official regional languages and a huge amount of local variants.

**Religions in percentages:** Hindu 83%, Muslim 11%, Sikh 2.5%, Christian 2%, Buddhist 1% and other 0.5%

**Government:** Federal Republic

**President:** Abdul Kalam, President since July 2002

### Economic profile (in US dollars)

**GDP:** \$482,765 million

**World GDP ranking:** 124th

**GDP per person:** \$453

**Annual growth:** 4.4%

**Inflation:** 4.0%

**Major industries:** textiles, chemicals, food processing, steel, transportation equipment, cement, mining, petroleum, machinery, software

**Major trading partners:** US, UAE, China, Hong Kong, UK, Singapore, Switzerland, Belgium

**External debt:** \$97,320 million

### AIDS/HIV statistics

**Adult prevalence rate:** 0.9%

**People living with HIV/AIDS:** 5.1 million

**Literacy rate:** 57%

**Male:** 68%

**Female:** 45%

**Life expectancy:** 64 years

**Male:** 63 years

**Female:** 65 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 3.1

**Population below poverty line:** 25%





# Italy



The Sisters of Mercy have been working, studying and teaching in Italy for many years. Some Sisters have either worked or studied at the Pontifical Institute of Liturgy of Sant'Anselmo. Sisters have also taught or studied at Regina Mundi Institute where most of the students in the English section are women religious from Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe.

One Sister currently teaches at the Gregorian University and at the Beda College, where the internationality of each of these settings is both a challenge and a source of great enrichment. In addition, the Sister with the responsibility of promoting the canonization of Catherine works in Rome as the postulator for the cause.

**Area:** 301,340 sq km

**Population:** 57,253,000

**Growth rate:** 0.1%

**Capital city:** Rome

**Population of capital:** 2,665,003

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** Italian 94%, others 6% (particularly Sardinians and Germans in Alto Adige and immigrants from Africa)

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** Italian (official). Several regional languages, such as Neapolitan and Sicilian, are widely spoken. French is spoken in Val d'Aosta and German in Alto Adige. Immigrants speak their own languages, particularly African languages.

**Religions (in percentages):** Roman Catholic 90%; Catholic and Jewish communities are deep-rooted. Growing Muslim community through immigration

**Government:** Republic. Parliamentary system with two chambers: the 630-member Chamber of Deputies and the 326-member Senate of the Republic

**President:** Carlo Azeglio Ciampi (since May 1999)



## Economic profile

(in US dollars)

*GDP:* \$1.09 trillion

*World GDP ranking:* 8th

*GDP per person:* \$20,355

*Annual growth:* 0.4%

*Inflation:* 2.7%

*Major industries:* tourism, machinery, iron and steel, chemicals, food processing, textiles, motor vehicles, clothing, footwear, ceramics

*Major trading partners:* Germany, France, US, Spain, UK, Switzerland, Netherlands, China

*External debt:* N/A

## AIDS/HIV statistics

*Adult prevalence rate:* 0.5%

*People living with HIV/AIDS:* 140,000

**Literacy rate:** Total population: 98% Male: 99% Female: 98%

**Life expectancy:** 79 years Male: 76 years Female: 82 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 1.2

**Population below poverty line:** N/A




# Jamaica



The Sisters of Mercy went to Jamaica in 1890 to join three women led by Jessie Ripoll who had started an orphanage on a piece of property she called 'Alpha' in Kingston, Jamaica, in 1880. Five Sisters of Mercy from Bermondsey, England, joined these three women to strengthen the works of mercy that they had already begun and to root the charism of Mercy in Jamaica.

Today, Sisters of Mercy primarily manage or sponsor a high school for girls, two residential homes for boys who are wards of the court, several primary and early educational institutions, trade training centres, the Archdiocesan Theological Centre and Laity Training Programme. They continue to feed the hungry, visit the sick and those who are in prison, and advocate for the voiceless and those whose lives are in jeopardy.

**Area:** 10,990

**Population:** 2,758,124 (July 2006 est.)

**Growth rate:** 0.8%

**Capital city:** Kingston

**Population of capital:** 575,880 people

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** black 90.9%, East Indian 1.3%, white 0.2%, Chinese 0.2%, mixed 7.3%, other 0.1%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** English (official). A dialect based on English, called 'patois English' or 'Creole', is also spoken.

**Religions (in percentages):** Protestant 56%; Catholic 5%, Rastafarian 5%

**Government:** Parliamentary monarchy. Head of State: Elizabeth II of England. Governor General: Sir Howard Cooke

**Prime Minister:** Portia Simpson-Miller

## Economic profile (in US dollars)

*GDP:* \$7.78 billion

*World GDP ranking:* 123rd

*GDP per person:* \$1,487

*Annual growth:* 1.0%

*Inflation:* 7.1%

*Major industries:* tourism, bauxite/alumina, agro processing, light manufacture, rum, cement, metal, paper, chemical products, telecommunications

*Major trading partners:* US, Canada, France, China, UK, Netherlands, Norway, Germany, Trinidad and Tobago, Japan

*External debt:* \$4,956 million

## AIDS/HIV statistics

*Adult prevalence rate:* 1.2%

*People living with HIV/AIDS:* 22,000

## Literacy rate

*Total population:* 87%

*Male:* 83%

*Female:* 91%

**Life expectancy:** 76 years

*Male:* 74 years

*Female:* 78 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 2.4

**Population below poverty line:** 19.1%





# Kenya



**Languages spoken and official language(s):** English and Swahili (both official). There are more than 50 other languages spoken, such as Kikuyu and Kamba.

**Religions:** Protestant 45%, Roman Catholic 33%, indigenous beliefs 10%, Muslim 10%, other 2%

*note:* a large majority of Kenyans are Christian, but estimates for the percentage of the population that adheres to Islam or indigenous beliefs vary widely.

**Government:** Unicameral legislature: 224-member National Assembly

**President:** Mwai Kibaki (since 2002)

## Economic profile (in US dollars)

GDP: \$11.39 billion

World GDP ranking: 80th

GDP per person: \$355

Annual growth: 1.8%

Inflation: 4.9%

*Major industries:* small-scale consumer goods (plastic, furniture, batteries, textiles, soap, cigarettes, flour), agricultural products, oil refining; aluminium, steel, lead, cement, commercial ship repair, tourism

*Major trading partners:* Uganda, UK, US, Netherlands, Egypt, Tanzania, Pakistan, UAE, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, India, China, Japan

*External debt:* \$5,833 million

## AIDS/HIV statistics

*Adult prevalence rate:* 6.7% *People living with HIV/AIDS:* 1.2 million

**Literacy rate:** Total population: 82% Male: 89% Female: 76%

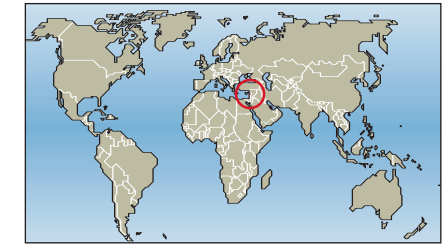
**Life expectancy:** 45 years Male: 44 years Female: 46 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 4.1

**Population below poverty line:** 50%



# Lebanon



The Sisters of Mercy went to Lebanon in October 1995. They work mainly in Sacramental preparation in school and parish; one Sister of Mercy of the Union of Great Britain is currently involved in the education of schoolchildren. The school has 1,200 students from pre-school to Grade 12 and provides Lebanese, American and IB programmes. In addition, the Sisters work with the United Nations – UNIC, UNRWA, UNIFIL, UNESCO, ESCWA – on global and local issues, as well as working with refugees, supporting children with disabilities and providing pastoral support for women.

**Area:** 10,400 sq km

**Population:** 3,761,000

**Growth rate:** 1.8%

**Capital city:** Beirut (Bayrut)

**Population of capital:** 1,792,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** Lebanese (80%) (the Lebanese are an Arab people). There is a significant Palestinian minority, mostly refugees. There are also Armenians (4%), Syrians, Kurds, Europeans and others (2%).

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** Arabic (official); French is widely spoken; Armenian and English are less common

**Religions (in percentages):** Muslim 55.3% (Shi'a, Sunni); Christian 37.6% (Roman Catholic; Maronite; Greek Catholic; Greek Orthodox; Apostolic Armenian ; Protestant) Druze 7.1%

**Government:** Unicameral Legislature: Assembly of Representatives, with 128 members elected for a four-year term by the religious communities.

**President:** Emile Lahoud (since November 1998)



## Economic profile (in US dollars)

GDP: \$17.9 billion

World GDP ranking: 98th

GDP per person: \$1,585

Annual growth: 1.0%

Inflation: 2.5%

*Major industries:* banking, tourism, food processing, jewellery, cement, textiles, mineral and chemical products, wood and furniture products, oil refining, metal

*Major trading partners:* Syria, UAE, Turkey, Switzerland, Saudi Arabia, Italy, France, Syria, Germany, China, US, UK

*External debt:* \$12,450 million

## AIDS/HIV statistics

*Adult prevalence rate:* 0.1%

*People living with HIV/AIDS:* 2,800

## Literacy rate

*Total population:* 86%

*Male:* 92%

*Female:* 80%

**Life expectancy:** 74 years

*Male:* 72 years

*Female:* 75 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 2.2

**Population below poverty line:** 28%



“When do we have enough food?  
 Enough water?  
 Enough clothes?  
 Enough books?  
 Enough sense of self?  
 Do we even know  
 what enough is?”



# Mexico

“Each human person has an inalienable dignity that is deeper than gender, race, ethnicity or human achievement, a dignity that encompasses the basic economic and social rights – the rights to food, shelter, basic education, clean water, health care and meaningful work.”

(Diarmuid O’Murchu)

The Sisters of Mercy went to Mexico in 1980. They work with poor people by providing food, clothing and household items. Their major project is to help in the education of 500 children. Classes in English are offered, as well as Computers, Sewing, Cooking, Religion and Scripture. Because of the tourism industry, these are important classes in helping students to gain employment. The Sisters help with and administer the various programmes offered.

The work of the Sisters of Mercy in Mexico is greatly assisted by a group of Korean doctors and dentists who come every other month for a clinic.

**Area:** 1,958,200 sq km

**Population:** 106,385,000

**Growth rate:** 1.8%

**Capital city:** Mexico City

**Population of capital:** 18,660,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** mestizo (Amerindian-Spanish) 60%, Amerindian or predominantly Amerindian 30%, white 9%, other 1%



**Languages spoken and official language(s):** Spanish (official). An estimated six million Mexicans speak indigenous languages

**Religions (in percentages):** Roman Catholic 89%, Protestant 6%, other 5%

**Government:** Federal republic

**President:** Vicente Fox Quesada (since December 2000)

### Economic profile (in US dollars)

GDP: \$617.1 billion

World GDP ranking: 12th

GDP per person: \$5,036

Annual growth: 0.7%

Inflation: 4.8%

**Major industries:** food and beverages, tobacco, chemicals, iron and steel, petroleum, mining, textiles, clothing, motor vehicles, consumer durables, tourism

**Major trading partners:** US, Canada, Spain, China, Japan

**External debt:** \$158,290 million

### AIDS/HIV statistics

Adult prevalence rate: 0.3%

People living with HIV/AIDS: 160,000

### Literacy rate

Total population: 91%

Male: 93%

Female: 89%

### Life expectancy: 73 years

Male: 70 years

Female: 76 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 2.5%

**Population below poverty line:** 40%





# New Zealand

Sisters of Mercy went to Aotearoa New Zealand in 1850, arriving in Auckland from Ireland. From 1850 to 1897, four Mercy congregations were founded. On 12 December 2005, the four congregations of Aotearoa New Zealand united to become a single congregation – Nga Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa Sisters of Mercy New Zealand.

Today, some 290 Sisters are engaged in mission throughout Aotearoa New Zealand and in Tonga and Samoa, in response to local needs for education, health care and social service with a particular care for women and children.

**Area:** 270,530 sq km

**Population:** 4,164,513

**Growth rate:** 1.0%

**Capital city:**  
Wellington



**Population of capital:** 343,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** European 67.6%, Maori 14.6%, Asian 9.2%, Pacific Peoples 6.9%, Middle Eastern, Latin American and African 0.9%, New Zealander 11.1%, 'Other Ethnicity' 11.2%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** English and Maori (both official, with English dominant)

**Religions (in percentages):** Anglican 14.9%, Roman Catholic 12.4%, Presbyterian 10.9%, Methodist 2.9%, Pentecostal 1.7%, Baptist 1.3%, other Christian 9.4%, other 3.3%, unspecified 17.2%, none 26%

**Government:** Parliamentary monarchy and member of the British Commonwealth

**President:** N/A



## Economic profile (in US dollars)

*GDP:* \$51.3 billion

*World GDP ranking:* 57th

*GDP per person:* \$14,754

*Annual growth:* 3.8%

*Inflation:* 0.7%

*Major industries:* food processing, wood and paper products, textiles, machinery, transportation equipment, banking and insurance, tourism, mining

*Major trading partners:* Australia, US, Japan, China, UK, Germany

*External debt:* N/A

## AIDS/HIV statistics

*Adult prevalence rate:* 0.1%

*People living with HIV/AIDS:* 1,400

## Literacy rate

*Total population:* 99%

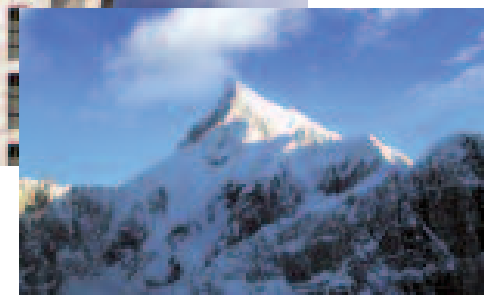
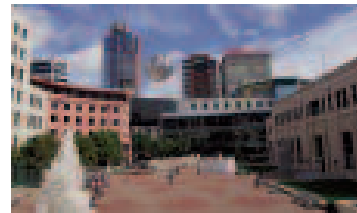
*Male:* 99%

*Female:* 99%

**Life expectancy:** 78 years *Male:* 76 years *Female:* 82 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 2.0

**Population below poverty line:** N/A



Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Achieve universal primary education

Promote gender equality and empower women

Reduce child mortality

Improve maternal health

Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Ensure environmental sustainability

Develop a global partnership for development

The Millennium Development Goals



# Nigeria



The first Mercy foundation in Nigeria was established in 1969 by four Mercy Sisters from Dungarvan, Co. Waterford, Ireland, in response to an invitation from Bishop P. Dalton OSA. In October 1969, the Sisters went to Yola, Adamawa State, in Northern Nigeria, where their work initially included secondary education, Young Catholic Students (YCS), charismatic renewal, catechist training, working with women, home visitation, and hospital and prison visitation.

In 1970, two of this pioneering group opened another community and started a clinic in Bare, a village about fifty miles from Yola. This community closed in 1990 because of lack of personnel. The second foundation was to Minna, Niger State, in Northern Nigeria. As in Yola, the Sisters were involved in education, catechetics, work with women and visitation. A third foundation in Lagos was established in 1986 at the invitation of Archbishop Okogie, specifically to set up St Leo's Parish Catholic school and a clinic. Later the Sisters became involved in a wide range of ministries which included developmental work, leadership training, basic Christian communities, facilitation and parish work.

**Area:** 923,770 sq km

**Population:** 131,859,731

*note:* estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected (July 2006 est.)

**Growth rate:** 2.9%

**Capital city:** Abuja

**Population of capital:** 452,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, is composed of more than 250 ethnic groups; the following are the largest and most politically influential: Hausa and Fulani 29%, Yoruba 21%, Igbo (Ibo) 18%, Ijaw 10%, Kanuri 4%, Ibibio 3.5%, Tiv 2.5%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** English (official). Each region has a main language depending on the predominant ethnic group, Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba.

**Religions (in percentages):** Muslim 50%, Christian 40%, indigenous beliefs 10%

**Government:** Federal republic

**President:** Olusegun Obasanjo (since May 1999, re-elected April 2003)

### Economic profile (in US dollars)

*GDP:* \$51.2 billion

*World GDP ranking:* 52nd

*GDP per person:* \$473

*Annual growth:* 6.2%

*Inflation:* 16.3%

*Major industries:* crude oil, coal, tin, columbite, palm oil, peanuts, cotton, rubber, wood, hides and skins, textiles, cement and other construction materials, food products, footwear, chemicals, fertilizer, printing, ceramics, steel, small commercial ship construction and repair

*Major trading partners:* US, Brazil, Spain, China, UK, Netherlands, France, Germany

*External debt:* \$31,119 million

### AIDS/HIV statistics

*Adult prevalence rate:* 5.4%

*People living with HIV/AIDS:* 3.6 million

**Literacy rate:** Total population: 64% Male: 72% Female: 56%

**Life expectancy:** 47 years Male: 46 years Female: 47 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 5.5

**Population below poverty line:** 60%




# Pakistan



“The poor need help today, not next week.”

(Catherine McAuley)

The Sisters of Mercy went to Pakistan in 1985. At present, Sisters of Mercy work in Notre Dame Institute of Education (NDIE), Karachi, St Mary's Lalazar, Rawalpindi, the Diocesan Board of Education office and in formation. They are also involved in many other activities such as facilitation, board membership and the Rotary Club. While only seven in number, including two temporary professed Pakistani Sisters, the Sisters of Mercy in Pakistan endeavour to reach out to those in need where and when they can.

**Area:** 796,100 sq km

**Population:** 165,803,560

**Growth rate:** 2.7%

**Capital city:** Islamabad

**Population of capital:** 698,000

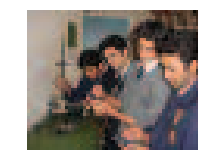
**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** Punjabi (44%), Pakhtun (15%), Sindhi (14%), Seraiki (10%), Muhajir (7.5%), Balochi (3.5%), other (4.66%)

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** Urdu (official, although it is spoken by only 9% of the population). Other languages are Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, Baluchi, English and more than 50 local languages.

**Religions (in percentages):** Islam (95%, official; most belong to the Sunni sect); Christian 2%; Hindu 1.6%; the remainder belong to other smaller sects.

**Government:** Federal republic

**President:** General Pervez Musharraf (self-appointed since June 2001, confirmed by referendum in 2002)



### Economic profile (in US dollars)

*GDP:* \$60 billion

*World GDP ranking:* 25th

*GDP per person:* \$687

*Annual growth:* 4.4%

*Inflation:* 4.5%

*Major industries:* textiles and clothing, food processing, pharmaceuticals, construction materials, paper products, fertilizer, shrimp

*Major trading partners:* US, UAE, UK, Germany, Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, China, Japan, Kuwait

*External debt:* \$32,019 million

### AIDS/HIV statistics

*Adult prevalence rate:* 0.1%

*People living with HIV/AIDS:* 74,000

### Literacy rate

*Total population:* 43%

*Male:* 57%

*Female:* 28%

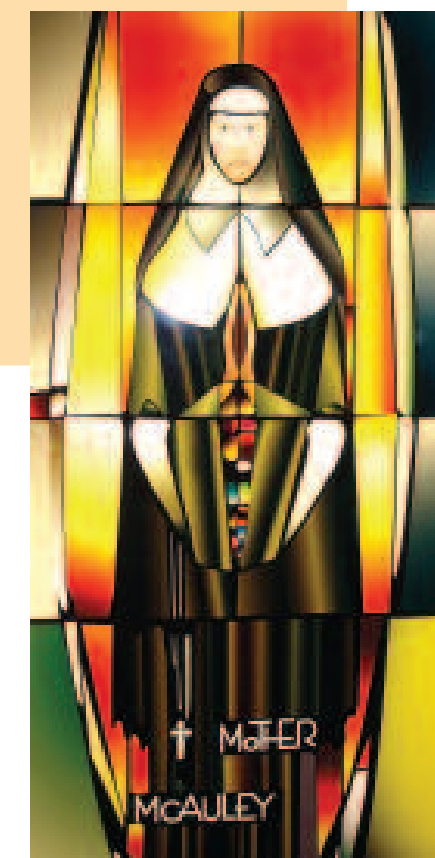
**Life expectancy:** 61 years

*Male:* 61 years

*Female:* 61 years

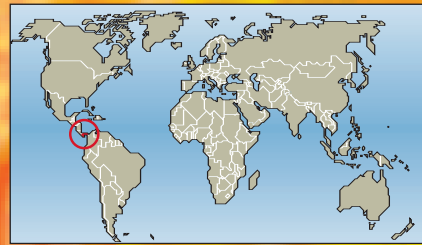
**Average number of children woman:** 5.1

**Population below poverty line:** 32%





# Panama



The Sisters of Mercy went to Panama in 1959. The Mercy presence in Panama began with the arrival of 12 Sisters from Brooklyn, New York. The Sisters began their work at St Mary's School in what was then known as the Canal Zone. In addition, the Sisters worked in the mountain regions of Panama, devoting themselves to a varied pastoral ministry, serving the needs of women and children.

The Sisters try to 'walk with the people,' learning their culture and problems. Today, that idea is a more fully evolved, yet ever-evolving ministry – the Centre of Holistic Formation and Skills Development. Working for solutions and systemic change, the Centre provides skills training and holistic formation, which focuses on human relations, communications, faith and health, as well as social, political and economic issues. The motto – chosen by the women and children who come to the Centre – is 'YES, WE CAN'.



**Area:** 75,520 sq km

**Population:** 3,235,000

**Growth rate:** 2.0%

**Capital city:** Panama City

**Population of capital:** 930,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** mestizo (mixed Amerindian and white) 70%, Amerindian and mixed (West Indian) 14%, white 10%, Amerindian 6%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** Spanish (official), several indigenous languages; most of the population also speaks English

**Religions (in percentages):** Roman Catholic 80%, Protestant 10% (mainly Evangelical), Muslim 5%, Baha'i 1%, Jewish 0.3%, others 3.7%

**Government:** Constitutional democracy

**President:** Martín Torrijos (since September 2004)

## Economic profile (in US dollars)

*GDP:* \$10.2 billion

*World GDP ranking:* 97th

*GDP per person:* \$3,397

*Annual growth:* 0.8%

*Inflation:* 1.2%

*Major industries:* construction, brewing, cement and other construction materials, sugar milling

*Major trading partners:* US, Sweden, Spain, Netherlands, Costa Rica, Antilles, Japan, Mexico, Colombia

*External debt:* \$8,245 million

## AIDS/HIV statistics

*Adult prevalence rate:* 0.9%

*People living with HIV/AIDS:* 16,000

## Literacy rate

*Total population:* 92%

*Male:* 93%

*Female:* 91%

**Life expectancy:** 75 years

*Male:* 72 years

*Female:* 77 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 2.7

**Population below poverty line:** 37%



# Papua New Guinea

The Sisters of Mercy first went to Papua New Guinea in 1956, when Australian Sisters of Mercy made their first overseas foundation. The first group of Mercy Sisters went to Goroka, to be followed by many others to different parts of the country. Today, there are 29 women in eleven locations. The Sisters work in a range of Mercy Works, including the Mercy Refugee Programme. Two Sisters of Mercy work with the Diocese of Daru-Kiunga in the western province of Papua New Guinea.

They work in the Social Programme for Refugees in the diocese and are involved in community development, service of refugees and displaced persons (from the Indonesian Province of West Papua). These placements began in 2003 and are ongoing. The Sisters stand beside the women of Papua New Guinea, particularly those who suffer through injustice, oppression and violence. They seek to build up their self-confidence and sense of self-worth. The Sisters are also concerned for the mutual development of women and men in families, church and society.

**Area:** 462,840 sq km

**Population:** 5,959,000

**Growth rate:** 2.5%

**Capital city:** Port Moresby

**Population of capital:** 275,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** Papuan 85%, Melanesian 15%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** English (official). A local Pidgin, with many English words and Melanesian grammar, is widely spoken, as well as 700 other local languages.

**Religions (in percentages):** Roman Catholic 32.8%, Protestant 58.4%; many people also follow local traditional religions

**Government:** Constitutional monarchy with parliamentary democracy. Sir Paulias Matane, Governor General; Prime Minister; Sir Michael Samare

**President:** N/A



## Economic profile (in US dollars)

*GDP:* \$2.9 billion

*World GDP ranking:* 116th

*GDP per person:* \$759

*Annual growth:* 0.9%

*Inflation:* N/A

*Major industries:* copra crushing, palm-oil processing, plywood production, wood-chip production, mining of gold, silver, and copper, crude oil production, petroleum refining, construction, tourism

*Major trading partners:* Australia, Japan, Germany, China, New Zealand

*External debt:* \$2,521 million

## AIDS/HIV statistics

*Adult prevalence rate:* 0.6%

*People living with HIV/AIDS:* 16,000

## Literacy rate

*Total population:* 64%

*Male:* 71% *Female:* 57%

**Life expectancy:** 58 years

*Male:* 57 years *Female:* 59 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 4.1

**Population below poverty line:** 37%



“The option for the poor embedded in the Gospel makes us aware that the poor suffer most directly from environmental decline and have least access to relief from their sufferings.”

(Earth Charter)



# Peru



The Sisters of Mercy first went to Peru in 1960 from Chicago and remained in Sicuani, Cusco, until their institutional ministries of education and health care became increasingly more controlled by the military government of the late 1960s. In 1964, four Sisters from Burlingame established a mission in Puno and ministered in clinics, schools and parishes. Gradually, inspired by increased appreciation of Aymara spirituality and culture, they moved into works that placed them in collaborative and empowering ministries with the Aymara people. Sisters from Pittsburg and Merion came in 1967 and 1985.



Sisters of Mercy from Ireland went to Trujillo in 1966 and worked in health care, catechetics in the schools and parish work. At this time, the Pueblos Jovenes (new towns) where they lived and worked were extremely poor. Schools, health centres and churches were built in the areas of El Porvenir, Florencia de Mora and Esperanza.

In 1974, the first Peruvian women joined the Order, and, in 1986, a Formation House was purchased in Lima so that the Sisters could attend the Formation courses in Lima with members of other religious orders.

In 1995, a new mission was established in the Sierra. The Sisters live in the town of Mache and travel all over the district to the rural villages.

Today, there are approximately 50 Sisters of Mercy ministering in Peru from Ireland, Newfoundland, England, New Zealand, Argentina, Australia and the US. Collectively, their ministries include empowerment centres for the advancement of women, pastoral services in parishes, a clean water project, holistic health and formation/incorporation work.

**Area:** 1,285,220 sq km

**Population:** 28,302,603

**Growth rate:** 1.9%

**Capital city:** Lima

**Population of capital:** 7,899,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** Amerindian 45%, mestizo (mixed Amerindian and white) 37%, white 15%, black, Japanese, Chinese, and other 3%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** Spanish, Quechua and Aymara (all official) and a large number of minor Amazonian languages

**Religions (in percentages):** Roman Catholic 81%, Seventh Day Adventist 1.4%, other Christian 0.7%, other 0.6%, unspecified or none 16.3%

**Government:** Constitutional republic

**President:** Alejandro Toledo Manrique (since July 2001)



## Economic profile (in US dollars)

**GDP:** \$54 billion

**World GDP ranking:** 51st

**GDP per person:** \$2,060

**Annual growth:** 5.2%

**Inflation:** 1.6%

**Major industries:** mining and refining of minerals; steel, metal fabrication; petroleum extraction and refining, natural gas; fishing and fish processing, textiles, clothing, food processing

**Major trading partners:** US, China, UK, Chile, Japan, Spain, Brazil, Colombia

**External debt:** \$27,512 million

## AIDS/HIV statistics

**Adult prevalence rate:** 0.5% **People living with HIV/AIDS:** 82,000

**Literacy rate:** Total population: 90% Male: 95% Female: 85%

**Life expectancy:** 69 years Male: 68 years Female: 71 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 2.9

**Population below poverty line:** 54%



# Philippines



The Sisters of Mercy went to the Philippines in 1954 when six Irish women responded to the invitation of Bishop Lino Gonzaga to establish a foundation at Tacloban City. Another foundation was established in 1957, when four Sisters of Mercy from Buffalo, New York, staffed a high school in northern Mindanao.

Today, over 40 Sisters of Mercy serve in areas where poverty and political corruption are widespread and basic services are nearly non-existent. The Sisters attempt to counter the country's negative impact on women and children by providing education, health care and centres that address their physical, spiritual and emotional needs. Providing educational opportunities for people at all levels of learning remains a priority for the Sisters. In addition to staffing and administering an elementary school, a high school and a junior college, the Sisters run programmes for indigent children.

**Area:** 300,000 sq km

**Population:** 89,468,677 (July 2006 est.)

**Growth rate:** 2.2%

**Capital city:** Metro Manila

**Population of capital:** 10,352,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** Tagalog 28.1%, Cebuano 13.1%, Ilocano 9%, Bisaya/Binisaya 7.6%, Hiligaynon Ilonggo 7.5%, Bikol 6%, Waray 3.4%, other 25.3%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** Philipino (based on Tagalog) and English (both official); eight major dialects – Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, Hiligaynon or Ilonggo, Bicol, Waray, Pampango, and Pangasinan. Spanish and Chinese are minority languages.

**Religions (in percentages):** Roman Catholic 83%, Protestant 5%, Muslim 5%, Independent Filipino Church 3%, Animist, Buddhist and other 4%

**Government:** Presidential republic

**President:** Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (since January 2001)

## Economic profile (in US dollars)

**GDP:** \$71.3 billion

**World GDP ranking:** 24th

**GDP per person:** \$1,032

**Annual growth:** 4.6%

**Inflation:** 4.5%

**Major industries:** electronics assembly, garments, footwear, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, wood products, food processing, petroleum refining, fishing

**Major trading partners:** Japan, US, Netherlands, Hong Kong, China, Singapore, Taiwan, Malaysia, South Korea

**External debt:** \$52,356 million

## AIDS/HIV statistics

**Adult prevalence rate:** less than 0.1%

**People living with HIV/AIDS:** 9,000

## Literacy rate

**Total population:** 95%

**Male:** 95% **Female:** 95%

**Life expectancy:** 70 years

**Male:** 68 years **Female:** 72 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 3.2

**Population below poverty line:** 40%



“Do not fear offending anyone. Speak as your mind directs and always act with courage.”

(Catherine McAuley)





# Puerto Rico



**Area:** 8,950 sq km  
**Population:** 3,927,188 (July 2006 est.)  
**Growth rate:** 0.8%  
**Capital city:** San Juan  
**Population of capital:** 1,366,000  
**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** white (mostly Spanish origin) 80.5%, black 8%, Amerindian 0.4%, Asian 0.2%, mixed and other 10.9%  
**Languages spoken and official language(s):** Spanish and English (both official)  
**Religions (in percentages):** Roman Catholic 85.3%, Protestant 4.7%, other 10%  
**Government:** Commonwealth. Sila María Calderón, Governor (since January 2001)  
**President:** N/A

## Economic profile (in US dollars)

**GDP:** \$70 billion  
**World GDP ranking:** 65  
**GDP per person:** N/A  
**Annual growth:** 5.6%  
**Inflation:** 5.3%  
**Major industries:** pharmaceuticals, electronics, clothing, food products, tourism  
**Major trading partners:** US, Netherlands, Antilles, Trinidad and Tobago  
**External debt:** N/A

## AIDS/HIV statistics

**Adult prevalence rate:** N/A **People living with HIV/AIDS:** 7,400 (1997)

## Literacy rate

**Total population:** 94% **Male:** 94%  
**Female:** 94%

## Life expectancy:

**Male:** 71 years **Female:** 80 years

## Average number of children per woman

**per woman:** 2-3  
**Population below poverty line:** N/A



The Sisters of Mercy went to Puerto Rico in 1941 from the Regional Community of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and have served continuously since their arrival on the island. They went at the request of Capuchin priests for the purpose of staffing Academia Católica, an elementary school in Old San Juan, adjacent to the San Francisco Church, which was in the charge of Capuchin friars from the Pittsburgh province. Besides their work at the school, the Sisters worked in La Perla, a slum area of the old city where they ministered to the poorest and taught catechism to the children, preparing them for the sacraments.

The year 1971 marked what we would like to call a 'new era' of Mercy presence in Puerto Rico – a different presence, but a very real one. Two native Puerto Rican Sisters, Ana Maria Cases and Ana Rosa de la Cruz, already serving on the island, requested permission to continue ministering in the schools run by other communities of Sisters. Permission was granted and the two Sisters have continued to work and carry on the charism of Mercy with dedication.

They perceive their missioning in Puerto Rico as their foundress Catherine McAuley described it: *'...a resolve to do good today, but better tomorrow...taking one day at a time...taking short careful steps and great strides.'*



# Romania

The Sisters of Mercy went to Romania in 1988 after the collapse of the Berlin Wall revealed the situation there. There has been a continuous presence since then. The primary commitment is to the children in the Marie Curie Children's Hospital – with a special concern for the abandoned children with no family support. The Sisters try to provide help to all families with sick children and they have a fund which has financed considerable improvements to the hospital facilities.



**Area:** 238,390 sq km  
**Population:** 22,303,552 (July 2006 est.)  
**Growth rate:** -0.1%  
**Capital city:** Bucharest  
**Population of capital:** 1,853,000  
**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** Romanian 89.5%, Hungarian 6.6%, Roma 2.5%, Ukrainian 0.3%, German 0.3%, Russian 0.2%, Turkish 0.2%, other 0.4%  
**Languages spoken and official language(s):** Romanian (official and predominant); ethnic minorities often speak their own languages, particularly Hungarian and Romany  
**Religions (in percentages):** Eastern Orthodox 86.8%, Protestant 7.5%, Roman Catholic 4.7%, other (mostly Muslim) and unspecified 0.9%, none 0.1%  
**Government:** Republic  
**President:** Ion Iliescu (since January 2001)

## Economic profile (in US dollars)

**GDP:** \$39.7 billion  
**World GDP ranking:** 43rd  
**GDP per person:** \$1,392  
**Annual growth:** 4.3%  
**Inflation:** 22%  
**Major industries:** textiles and footwear, light machinery and auto assembly, mining, timber, construction materials, metallurgy, chemicals, food processing, petroleum refining  
**Major trading partners:** Italy, Germany, France, Turkey, UK, Russia  
**External debt:** \$11,653 million

## AIDS/HIV statistics

**Adult prevalence rate:** 0.1%  
**People living with HIV/AIDS:** 6,500

## Literacy rate

**Total population:** 98%  
**Male:** 99%  
**Female:** 97%

## Life expectancy:

**Male:** 67 years  
**Female:** 74 years



## Average number of children per woman

**per woman:** 1.3  
**Population below poverty line:** 25%





# Samoa

The Sisters of Mercy went to work in Samoa in January 1972. Six Samoan Sisters are engaged in ministry there, staffing two primary and pre-schools, St Theresa's in Fusi and Joan of Arc in Leulumoega and one secondary school, Paul VI in Leulumoega.

The Sisters are also actively involved in the life of local Church, in particular in their villages and parishes, assisting and supporting families.



**Area:** 2,840 sq km

**Population:** 176,908 (July 2006 est.)

**Growth rate:** 0.6%

**Capital city:** Apia

**Population of capital:** 40,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** Samoan 92.6%, Euronesian (of European and Polynesian blood) 7%, European 0.4%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** Samoan and English (both official)

**Religions (in percentages):** Congregational 47.2%; Roman Catholic 22.3%; Methodist 15.1%; Mormon 8.6%; other 6.8%



**Government:** Mix of parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy. Malietoa Tanumafili II, Head of State (for life, since April 1963); Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister (since November 1998, re-elected in 2001)

**President:** N/A

## Economic profile (in US dollars)

GDP: \$254 million

World GDP ranking: 151st

GDP per person: \$1,505

Annual growth: 1.3%

Inflation: 2.5%

Major industries: food processing, building materials, motor parts

Major trading partners: Australia, US, Indonesia, New Zealand, Fiji, Taiwan, Singapore, Japan

External debt: \$204 million

**AIDS/HIV statistics:** N/A

### Literacy rate

Total population: 99%

Male: 99%

Female: 98%

### Life expectancy: 70 years

Male: 67 years

Female: 73 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 2.94 children (2006 est.)

**Population below poverty line:** N/A

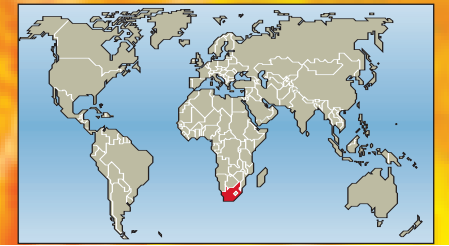


*“My God, look down with pity and mercy on your afflicted poor, and grant us the grace to do what we can for their relief and comfort.”*

(Catherine McAuley)



# South Africa



The Sisters of Mercy went to South Africa in 1897. Sisters of Mercy from Strabane, Co. Tyrone, Ireland, were invited by Bishop Gaughren to open a convent school for girls in Mafikeng.

The Sisters left Strabane and travelled via Dublin and Holyhead to London. On 24 September 1897, they left London by ship for South Africa, landing in Cape Town on 17 October. The Sisters arrived in Mafikeng on 15 February 1898. In July of the following year, the school opened, but soon after that the Boer War began. The Sisters remained in Mafikeng, nursing the soldiers on both sides in the war.

Today, the Sisters in South Africa are in ministries with the poor people in the country. Their ministries include education at primary, secondary and adult levels; shelters for the homeless, abused women and children; clinics and home-based care programmes. They minister to those suffering from HIV/AIDS, and to the orphans of those who have died from AIDS.

A new mission to Addo opened in March 2005, at the invitation of the Bishop of Port Elizabeth, Bishop Michael Coleman. There has been no resident priest for 30 years and Mass is celebrated once each month. The Sisters provide for the people in the parish. They support the teachers in the schools – whether with ideas or in making displays or painting walls. In outlying areas, they are involved with some local women in operating a soup kitchen for the poor.

**Area:** 1,221,040 sq km

**Population:** 44,187,637

*note:* estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected (July 2006 est.)

**Growth rate:** 1.9%

**Capital city:** Pretoria (administrative), Cape Town (legislative)

**Population of Pretoria:** 1,209,000

**Population of Cape Town:** 2,967,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** black African 79%, white 9.6%, coloured 8.9%, Indian/Asian 2.5%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** Afrikaans, English, isi Ndebele, Sepedi, Sesotho, Siswati, Xitsonga, Setswana, Tshiven da, isi Xhosa, isi Zulu (all official)

**Religions (in percentages):** Christian 68% (including African independent churches), African beliefs 28%; Muslim 2%.

**Government:** Republic

**President:** Thabo Mbeki (since June 1999, re-elected in April 2004)

## Economic profile (in US dollars)

GDP: \$113,274 million

World GDP ranking: 19th

GDP per person: \$3,067

Annual growth: 3.0%

Inflation: 8.5%

Major industries: mining (world's largest producer of platinum, gold, chromium), car assembly, metalwork, machinery, textiles, iron and steel, chemicals, fertilizer, foodstuffs, commercial ship repair

Major trading partners: US, UK, Japan, Germany, Netherlands, China, France, Saudi Arabia, Iran

External debt: \$24,050 million

### AIDS/HIV statistics

Adult prevalence rate: 21.5%

People living with HIV/AIDS: 5.3 million

**Literacy rate:** Total population: 85% Male: 86% Female: 85%

**Life expectancy:** 48 years Male: 45 years Female: 51 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 2.6

**Population below poverty line:** 50%





# Sudan



The Sisters of Mercy began work with the Sudanese in 1994 at the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya. Young Sudanese refugees had been forced to flee there from camps in Ethiopia, following the overthrow of Mengistu Haile Mariam in 1991. The Sisters moved with the refugees into the Diocese of Rumbek and

El Obeid in 2001, and established schools and services which were a natural follow-up to the work already undertaken in the Kakuma Refugee Camp.

During the many years of conflict in Southern Sudan, thousands of Sudanese have fled Sudan to neighbouring countries, seeking refuge and the chance to start a new life in another country. A fragile peace deal has encouraged some of these refugees to return to Sudan, where they encounter a very poor infrastructure. The Sisters of Mercy are assisting in putting the education system back in place. This is a collaborative ministry effort with Sisters from Australia, England and the US.

**Area:** 2,505,810 sq km

**Population:** 41,236,378 (July 2006 est.)

**Growth rate:** 2.2%

**Capital city:** Khartoum (Al-Khartoum) (executive and ministerial); Omdurman (Umm-Durman) (legislative)

**Population of Khartoum:** 4,286,000

**Population of Omdurman:** 1,599,300

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** black 52%, Arab 39%, Beja 6%, foreign 2%, other 1%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** Arabic (official and spoken by most of the population); the different ethnic groups speak over 100 different languages



**Religions (in percentages):** Sunni Muslim 70%, indigenous beliefs 25%, Christian 5%

**Government:** Government of National Unity (GNU) – the National Congress Party (NCP) and Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) formed a power-sharing government under the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement

**President:** General Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir (since 30 June 1989, following the overthrow of the civilian government; re-elected in 1996 and 2000)



## Economic profile (in US dollars)

*GDP:* \$12.1 billion

*World GDP ranking:* 61st

*GDP per person:* \$315

*Annual growth:* 6.4 %

*Inflation:* 10.0%

*Major industries:* oil, cotton ginning, textiles, cement, edible oils, sugar, soap distilling, shoes, petroleum refining, pharmaceuticals, armaments, motor/light truck assembly

*Major trading partners:* China, Japan, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt, India, Germany, Australia

*External debt:* \$15,348 million

## AIDS/HIV statistics

*Adult prevalence rate:* 2.3%

*People living with HIV/AIDS:* 400,000

**Literacy rate:** Total population: 58% Male: 69% Female: 46%

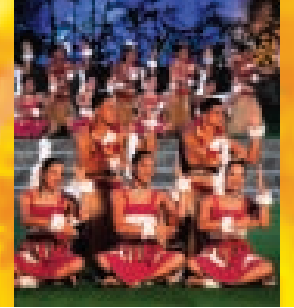
**Life expectancy:** 56 years Male: 54 years Female: 57 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 4.4

**Population below poverty line:** 40%



# Tonga



The Sisters of Mercy went to Tonga in January 1964.

Today five Tongan Sisters are engaged in ministry. One is a counsellor at a Centre for women and children, one the director of *Caritas Tonga* and the coordinator for the justice and development office of the diocese, one in pastoral work in local villages, and one teaching at a local Catholic Secondary School, Takuilau College, and one in full time study. The sisters are actively involved in the life of the families in the local villages and parishes.

**Area:** 750 sq km

**Population:** 114,689 (July 2006 est.)

**Growth rate:** 0.2%

**Capital city:** Nuku'alofa

**Population of capital:** 35,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** N/A

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** Tongan and English (both official)

**Religions (in percentages):** Free Wesleyan 43.6%, Roman Catholic 16%, Mormon 12.1%, Free Church of Tonga 11.0%, Church of Tonga 7.3%

**Government:** Monarchy, limited by the power of the nobles.

**President:** N/A (George Tupou, King since the death of Taufa'ahau Tupou IV in 2006)



## Economic profile (in US dollars)

*GDP:* \$1.3 billion

*World GDP ranking:* 158th

*GDP per person:* \$1,574

*Annual growth:* 1.6%

*Inflation:* 8.0%

*Major industries:* tourism, fishing

*Major trading partners:* Japan, China, US, Taiwan, New Zealand, Fiji, Australia

*External debt:* \$63 million

**AIDS/HIV statistics:** N/A

## Literacy rate

*Total population:* 99%

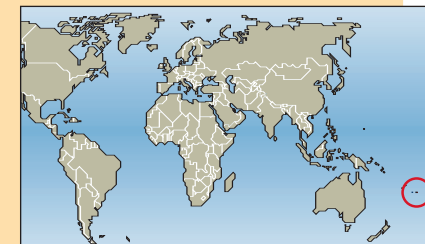
*Male:* 98%

*Female:* 99%

**Life expectancy:** 69 years

*Male:* 68 years

*Female:* 69 years



**Average number of children per woman:** 3.8

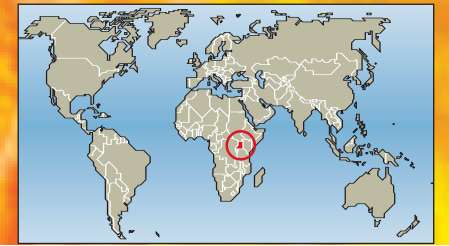
**Population below poverty line:** N/A

“Let ours be the time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice.”

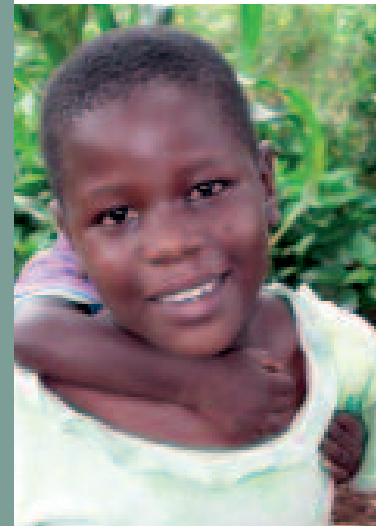
(Diarmuid O'Murchu)



# Uganda



The Sisters of Mercy went to work in Uganda in 2002 as part of Mercy Refugee Service, in association with Jesuit Refugee Service, under Mercy Works Inc.



The Sisters work in Adumani on the Uganda-Sudanese border, where they are involved with the Sudanese refugees, in education and pastoral ministry. The Sisters' main focus has been on refugee services and pastoral care.

**Area:** 241,040 sq km

**Population:** 28,195,754

*note:* estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality

and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected (July 2006 est.)

**Growth rate:** 3.2%

**Capital city:** Kampala

**Population of capital:** 1,246,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** Baganda 17%, Ankole 8%, Basoga 8%, Iteso 8%, Bakiga 7%, Langi 6%, Rwanda 6%, Bagisu 5%, Acholi 4%, Lugbara 4%, Batoro 3%, Bunyoro 3%, Alur 2%, Bagwere 2%, Bakonjo 2%, Jopodhola 2%, Karamojong 2%, Rundi 2%, non-African (European, Asian, Arab) 1%, other 8%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** English (official), Swahili, Luganda

**Religions (in percentages):** Christian 62%, traditional religions 19%, Muslim 15%, other 4%

**Government:** Republic

**President:** Yoweri Museveni (since January 1986 – following the overthrow of Tito Okello – elected in 1996 and re-elected in 2001)

## Economic profile (in US dollars)

*GDP:* \$5.8 billion

*World GDP ranking:* 76th

*GDP per person:* \$301

*Annual growth:* 5.0%

*Inflation:* 3.5%

*Major industries:* sugar, brewing, tobacco, cotton textiles, cement.

*Major trading partners:* Kenya, Netherlands, Belgium, France, Germany, Rwanda, UAE, South Africa, India, China.

*External debt:* \$3,733 million

## AIDS/HIV statistics

*Adult prevalence rate:* 4.1%

*People living with HIV/AIDS:* 530,000

## Literacy rate

*Total population:* 67%

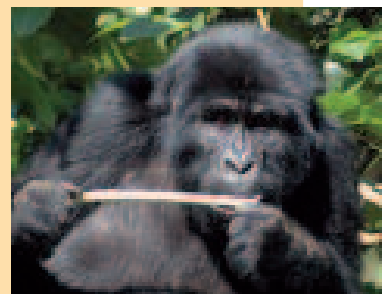
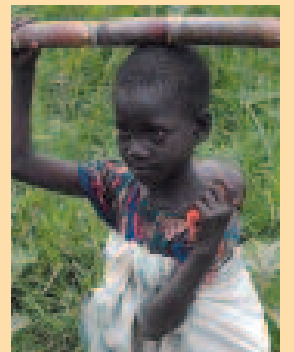
*Male:* 78% *Female:* 57%

**Life expectancy:** 46 years

*Male:* 45 years *Female:* 47 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 7.1

**Population below poverty line:** 35%



“For Catherine, Mercy is everything. It is mercy that through all ages of the church has moved the faithful to instruct and comfort the sick and the dying poor.”

(Mary Daly RSM)

“The dominant patterns of production and consumption are causing environmental devastation, the depletion of resources and a massive extinction of species.”

(Earth Charter)

# United Kingdom



The Sisters of Mercy went to Great Britain in November 1839. Catherine arrived with Sister Mary Clare Moore, Sister Mary Clare Agnew and Sister Mary Augustine Taylor to open the first foundation outside Ireland – at Bermondsey. Mary Clare Moore, the first Superior, was to be 'lent' for a year. In fact, she stayed for 35 years. She also spent some time in the Crimea. Today, Bermondsey, which belongs to the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy in Great Britain, is their main archive and heritage base.

The Sisters of Mercy in England, Scotland and Wales consist of three independent groups, each with its own authority.



Historically, each Convent of Mercy in England, Scotland and Wales was founded to be independent. However, in recent decades, there has been some change. A number of convents remain independent, under the title of 'The Federation of the Sisters of Mercy', while others have amalgamated to form two larger groups – 'The Institute of Our Lady of Mercy' and 'The Sisters of Mercy of the Union of Great Britain'.

**Area:** 242,910 sq km

**Population:** 60,609,153 (July 2006 est.)

**Growth rate:** 0.3%

**Capital city:** London

**Population of capital:** 7,619,000

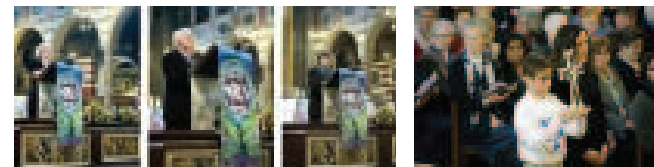
**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** white 92.1% (of which English 83.6%, Scottish 8.6%, Welsh 4.9%, Northern Irish 2.9%), black 2%, Indian 1.8%, Pakistani 1.3%, mixed 1.2%, other 1.6%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** English (official), Welsh, Scots Gaelic and the languages of various immigrant groups

**Religions (in percentages):** Protestant 53.4% (Anglican 43.5%; Presbyterian 4.5%; Methodist 2.2%); Roman Catholic 9.8%; Orthodox 1%; other Christians 1.7%; Muslim 2.6%; Hindu 0.6%, Sikh 0.5%; Jewish 0.5%; other/no religion 29.9%

**Government:** Constitutional parliamentary monarchy. Tony Blair, Prime Minister (since 1997, re-elected 2001 and 2005). Parliament has two chambers: the House of Commons, with 646 members, and the House of Lords, with 737 members.

**President:** N/A (Elizabeth II, Queen and Head of State since February 1952)



## Economic profile (in US dollars)

*GDP:* \$1.43 trillion

*World GDP ranking:* 6th

*GDP per person:* \$24,323

*Annual growth:* 1.5%

*Inflation:* 1.4%

*Major industries:* machine tools, electric power equipment, automation equipment, railway equipment, shipbuilding, aircraft, motor vehicles and parts, electronics and communications equipment, metals, chemicals, coal, petroleum, paper and paper products, food processing, textiles, clothing, other consumer goods.

*Major trading partners:* US, Germany, France, Ireland, Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Italy, China

*External debt:* N/A



## AIDS/HIV statistics

*Adult prevalence rate:* 0.2%

*People living with AIDS/HIV:* 51,000

## Literacy rate

*Total population:* 99%

*Male:* 99%

*Female:* 99%

## Life expectancy: 78 years

*Male:* 76 years

*Female:* 81 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 1.6%

**Population below poverty line:** 17%

“A sustainable way of life implies a sense of knowing what is enough and how to live with enough so that all can live with what they need.”

(Diarmuid O'Murchu)



# United States of America



Seven Sisters of Mercy went to the US in 1843. Their leader, 33-year-old Frances Warde, was the first of the founding mothers. They opened schools; visited the sick, the poor and the imprisoned; and soon established Mercy Hospitals. Within a few years, they were joined by other young and energetic women from Ireland, eager to establish ministries in states and territories across the fast-growing nation.

By 1992, there were more than 9,000 Sisters of Mercy in the United States. The Sisters established Catholic schools and colleges, as well



as the Catholic social services network. Today ministries include health care, education, parish work, spirituality centres, prison ministry, immigration, empowerment of women, care of the earth and inter-faith work. Since its establishment in 1981, Mercy housing has developed 15,260 units of affordable housing for more than 44,000 individuals and families who are economically poor. Mercy continues to speak out against injustices of racism, environmental destruction, domestic violence, immigration and misuse of power.

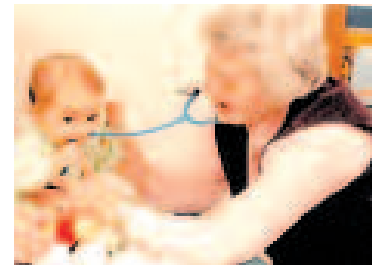
**Area:** 9,629,090 sq km

**Population:** 298,444,215 (July 2006 est.)

**Growth rate:** 1.0%

**Capital city:** Washington DC

**Population of capital:** 4,098,000



**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** white 81.7%, black 12.9%, Asian 4.2%, Amerindian and Alaskan native 1%, native Hawaiian and other Pacific islander 0.2%.

note: a separate listing for Hispanic is not included because the US Census Bureau considers Hispanic to mean a person of Latin American descent (including persons of Cuban, Mexican, or Puerto Rican origin) living in the US who may be of any race or ethnic group (white, black, Asian, etc.)

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** English (official); Spanish; Native American languages and those of each immigrant group

**Religions (in percentages):** Protestant 58%, Catholic 26%, Jewish 2%, Muslim 2%, other 2%, non-religious 10%

**Government:** Presidential government, federal system

**President:** George W. Bush (since January 2001, re-elected 2004)



## Economic profile (in US dollars)

*GDP:* \$10.1 trillion

*World GDP ranking:* 1st

*GDP per person:* \$32,778

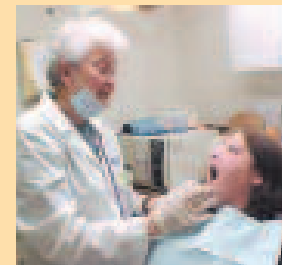
*Annual growth:* 2.3%

*Inflation:* 1.2%

*Major industries:* petroleum, steel, motor vehicles, aerospace, telecommunications, chemicals, electronics, food processing, consumer goods, lumber, mining

*Major trading partners:* Canada, Mexico, Japan, UK, China, Germany

*External debt:* \$9.5 trillion



## AIDS/HIV statistics

*Adult prevalence rate:* 0.6%

*People living with HIV/AIDS:* 950,000

**Literacy rate:** Total population:

99%

Male: 99%

Female: 99%

## Life expectancy:

77 years Male: 74 years Female: 80 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 2.1

**Population below poverty line:** 12%

“*Mercy Sisters will continue to be in solidarity with the poor within their local geographical areas.*”

(MIA Working Party)

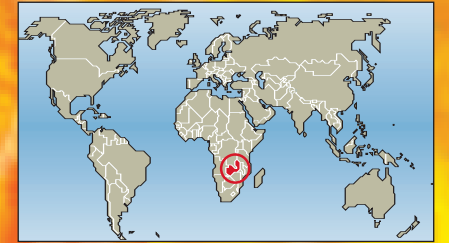




# West Papua

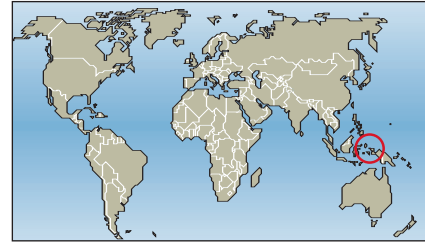


# Zambia



“We are at once citizens of different nations and of one world in which the local and the global are linked.”

(UN statement)



**Languages spoken and official language(s):** Bahasa Indonesia (official). There are 253 tribal languages. West Papua and its neighbour, Papua New Guinea, are home to 15% of all the world's known languages

**Religions (in percentages):** Christian 74% approx., Muslim 24% approx, traditional religion 2% approx.

**Government:** Effectively controlled by Indonesia. The Papua Council and its Presidium (Executive), which once acted as a figurehead for the independence movement, no longer has the backing of all the organizations advocating independence in West Papua. The local legislature, with a native Papuan upper house, has limited real power: it cannot propose legislation and has limited veto rights. Effective law-making power is retained in Jakarta where Indonesia's parliament retains control over revenue collection and distribution, the military and the police.

**President:** Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri

### Economic profile (in US dollars)

GDP: N/A  
 World GDP ranking: N/A  
 GDP per person: \$450  
 Annual growth: N/A  
 Inflation: N/A  
 Major industries: oil, gas, gold, copper, wood and other natural resources  
 Major trading partners: N/A  
 External debt: N/A

**AIDS/HIV statistics:** N/A

**Literacy rate:** 71.5% (no breakdown available)

**Life expectancy:** 64 years (no breakdown available)

**Average number of children per woman:** N/A

**Population below poverty line:** N/A



The Sisters of Mercy went to Zambia in 1971. They joined religious congregations already established there and became involved in helping the people by means of nursing, teaching and teacher training.

In 1979, four Sisters were missioned to Monze Diocese. Thus the first Mercy community was established in Monze town. In 1986, a second mission was opened in Fumbo, in the Guembe Valley, a district afflicted by hunger and abject poverty. In 1990, a third mission was opened in Kaleya.

The Sisters in Zambia have decided to focus on two main areas of ministry, namely welcoming new members and responding to HIV/AIDS and its impact on the people in Zambia. However, education, health care, visitation, pastoral ministry, justice and spirituality are all aspects of the Sisters' ministry in Zambia.

**Area:** 752,610 sq km

**Population:** 11,502,010

*note:* estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected (July 2006 est.)

**Growth rate:** 2.6%

**Capital city:** Lusaka

**Population of capital:** 1,394,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** African 98.7%, European 1.1%, other 0.2%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** English (official). The 70 or so local languages include Bemba, Kaonda, Lozi, Lunda, Luvale, Nyanja and Tonga.

**Religions (in percentages):** Christian 50–75%, Muslim and Hindu 24–49%, indigenous beliefs 1%

**Government:** Republic

**President:** Levy Mwanawasa (since January 2002)

### Economic profile (in US dollars)

GDP: \$3.6 billion  
 World GDP ranking: 122nd  
 GDP per person: \$323  
 Annual growth: 3.0%  
 Inflation: 19.7%  
 Major industries: copper mining and processing, construction, foodstuffs, beverages, chemicals, textiles, fertilizer, horticulture  
 Major trading partners: South Africa, UK, Switzerland, Tanzania, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zimbabwe, UAE  
 External debt: \$5,671 million

### AIDS/HIV statistics

Adult prevalence rate: 16.5%  
 People living with HIV/AIDS: 920,000

**Literacy rate:** Total population: 78% Male: 85% Female: 72%

**Life expectancy:** 40 years Male: 39 years Female: 40 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 5.7

**Population below poverty line:** 86%



The Sisters of Mercy have worked in West Papua for several years. At present, two Australian Sisters are working there as part of a Mercy Refugee Service project, sponsored by Mercy Works Inc. West Papua is at present under Indonesian control. It has some 240 different tribal peoples and is immense in its ecological diversity. West Papua and Papua New Guinea are the lungs of the Asia Pacific, containing the last great surviving virgin rainforest after the Amazon.

**Area:** 418,000 sq km

**Population:** 2,795,182

**Growth rate:** 3%

**Capital city:** Jayapura

**Population of capital:** 1,956,300

**Ethnicity of people (no percentages available):** indigenous: Melanesian (including Aitinyo, Aefak, Asmat, Agast, Dani, Ayamaru, Mandacan Biak, Serui), non-indigenous (including Javanese, Bugis, Batakese, Minahasanese, Chinese)

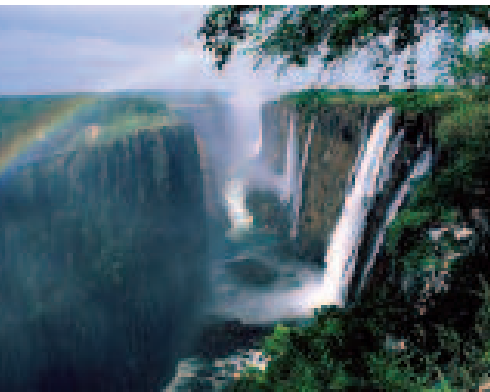




# Zimbabwe



The Sisters of Mercy went to Zimbabwe in 1990 to be involved in catechesis amongst the people. Initially the Sisters lived with an indigenous congregation, before working in the ministry of higher education. One Sister sewed clothes and baked bread and cakes for sale; she also offered a bed and breakfast service during the holidays to stretch the budget in order to get the school fees for three children she was sponsoring.



Another group of Sisters works with Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), Southern Africa Region, which operates in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Angola, South Africa, Namibia and Zambia. The regional office has been located in Harare since 1995, but is currently in the process

of moving to Johannesburg in South Africa because of the deteriorating situation in Zimbabwe. The infrastructure is falling apart, leading to problems with electricity, water and communication (email and internet). Many commodities (including fuel) are very difficult, if not impossible, to find in the country. All of these problems are making the work of the JRS costly and inefficient and are a problem for other countries in the region who are trying to communicate with the regional office.

**Area:** 390,760 sq km

**Population:** 12,236,805

*note:* estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected (July 2006 est.)

**Growth rate:** 2.4%

**Capital city:** Harare

**Population of capital:** 1,469,000

**Ethnicity of people (in percentages):** African 98% (Shona 82%, Ndebele 14%, other 2%), mixed and Asian 1%, white less than 1%

**Languages spoken and official language(s):** English (official), Shona, Sindebele (the language of the Ndebele, sometimes called Ndebele), numerous minor tribal dialects

**Religions (in percentages):** African traditional beliefs 55%, Christian 45%

**Government:** Parliamentary democracy

**President:** Robert Mugabe (since December 1987, re-elected in 1990, 1996 and 2002)

### Economic profile (in US dollars)

*GDP:* \$9 billion

*World GDP ranking:* 95th

*GDP per person:* \$436

*Annual growth:* -8.2%

*Inflation:* 133%

*Major industries:* mining (coal, gold, platinum, copper, nickel, tin, clay, numerous metallic and non-metallic ores), steel, wood products, cement, chemicals, fertilizer, clothing and footwear, foodstuffs, beverages

*Major trading partners:* South Africa, Switzerland, UK, China, Germany, Botswana

*External debt:* \$3,780 million

### AIDS/HIV statistics

*Adult prevalence rate:* 24.6%

*People living with HIV/AIDS:* 1.8 million

**Literacy rate:** Total population: 89% Male: 93% Female: 85%

**Life expectancy:** 33 years Male: 34 years Female: 33 years

**Average number of children per woman:** 4.0

**Population below poverty line:** 80%



# Afterword

**I am writing this Afterword on the very day that the Gospel selection being read throughout the entire world has Jesus challenging us, “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful... Forgive, and you will be forgiven...” (Luke 6: 36-37). We Sisters of Mercy have been trying to exemplify Jesus’ challenge through our ministries, individual and institutional, for more than 175 years, first in Dublin, then wherever we were sent, or found ourselves, alone or with others.**

“Be merciful,  
just as your Father is merciful.  
Forgive,  
and you will be forgiven...”

(Luke 6: 36-37)

This marvellous booklet, compiled and edited by Deirdre Mullan RSM, Director of Mercy Global Concern, our Mercy presence at the United Nations in New York, gives the “facts and figures” that tell part of the story of worldwide Mercy. What we get is a sense of where we Sisters of Mercy are and what we are doing, and that is ever so important in a world that seems to thrive on terror, revenge, greed, and using and abusing people rather than on serving, healing, educating and loving people. Whether it is a single Sister of Mercy serving God’s people in Haiti, Lebanon and elsewhere, or many Sisters of Mercy making real the corporal and spiritual works of Mercy in Ireland, Great Britain, Canada, the Americas, Australia, New Zealand, Philippines and beyond, the challenge to “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” is being lived out in concrete and beautiful ways for God though generous service to all God’s people. We Sisters of Mercy – and our many Mercy Associates, formal and informal – should rejoice that we have been given a gracious “renewable” energy by God to continue to reveal God’s merciful face in this fragile world of ours.

As Archbishop Desmond Tutu has written, “As much as the world has an instinct for evil and is a breeding ground for genocide, holocaust, slavery, racism, war, oppression, and injustice, the world has an even greater instinct for goodness, rebirth, mercy, truth, freedom, and love.”

Undaunted by the many challenges facing her as a woman in the Catholic Church of her day, Catherine McAuley acted on that “greater instinct” when she began the Sisters of Mercy more than 175 years ago in Dublin, Ireland. She responded to Jesus’ challenge to “Be Merciful” and to forgive – and her Sisters of Mercy, spread throughout the world in 44 countries, engaged in a multiplicity of ministries, continue to do so.

**“What a glorious thing it is to be a Sister of Mercy!”**



Carol Rittner RSM  
Chairperson, Mercy Global Concern