

Speech given by Sister Faye Kelly RSM
Community Leader, Community South C
while launching the publication
'I HAVE A VOICE – Trafficked women – in their own words'
27 August 2015

I am delighted to be here with all gathered this afternoon to share this occasion with Angela Reed and Marietta Latonio. We rejoice with Angela and Marietta on the publication of the book, **'I Have a Voice - Trafficked women – in their own words'** which gives us an insight into the calibre of Angela's PhD research carried out with women who came to know Angela's credibility and who trusted her sufficiently to share their stories with her.

It is right and fitting that we acknowledge the invitation extended to Angela by Our Community, led by Denis Moriarty, the Managing Director, to be part of a supportive community environment that has facilitated the further processing of her research and also the publication of this book.

Angela has made it very clear that out of respect for the women who shared their stories with her, she, in turn, would present them with their stories in print, thus giving them a voice. Angela travelled to the Philippines last week to launch the book there, and to give a copy to each one of the women.

In this work, Angela, with the assistance of Mayet, her bi-cultural research assistant, has recorded the stories of twenty two women whose life experiences from early childhood seemed to predispose

them to vulnerability to people all too willing to exploit that vulnerability.

The introduction of each chapter of the book provides a context and the social settings for the stories that follow. The first chapter provides insights into damaging childhood experiences that lead to vulnerability and it is in the second chapter that we hear the voices of the vulnerable. The desire to move from the experience of being trafficked is the key to the stories told by women in the third chapter.

Angela uses 'The Life Course Perspective' framework for her research as a way of developing an understanding of the relationship between a person's life experience and the social, economic and political context in which their stories unfold.

As we read the story of Emerita, Ester or Emma, we are drawn to engage with each one of these women and to be moved by their resilience and desire for a future of hope.

We also become aware of the significance of recovery programs such as the Good Shepherd program in the Philippines that was the turning point for these women, from hopelessness to reclaiming their identity.

In this book, Angela has given us points to ponder, and questions to assist our own reflection on each woman's story. She helps us to situate ourselves in our own life-context as a starting point for our listening to the voices of these women depicted in word and art and

responding to the deep voices within ourselves as a result of this reflection.

In our Mercy tradition and story of our Foundress, Catherine McAuley, this book resonates with our particular charism and values, and Catherine's unstinting selflessness in her endeavours and compassion for vulnerable women.

Again on behalf of all of us, I express both our congratulations and our gratitude to Angela and Mayet for bringing the voices of these women into our own reflection and conversations.

It is now with great pleasure that I launch the book, 'I Have a Voice – Trafficked women – in their own words' by Dr Angela Reed and Marietta Latonia.