



Today, Sisters of Mercy, through Mercy International Association, use their resources to respond to issues of global poverty demonstrated in the massive displacement of persons worldwide.

## A pathway to Mercy's Mission Future

Announcing the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, Pope Francis proclaimed: *Mercy is the force that reawakens us for new life and instils in us the courage to look to the future with hope.*

Back in the early 1800s Catherine McAuley understood this and the people to whom she ministered experienced it. Thanks to the magnanimous generosity of her donor William Callaghan, Catherine was able to open the first House of Mercy on Lower Baggot Street in Dublin, Ireland on September 24<sup>th</sup>, 1827. She had intended to continue this work with the support of her co-workers as a lay woman but in 1831, she with two other companions, took their vows and became the first Sisters of Mercy. They did this because Catherine realised the need to establish a religious structure that would ensure the extended existence of what she was establishing at the House of Mercy.

Mercy continued to be the awakener of new life as Catherine, between 1831 and her death in 1841, extended her vision by establishing other Foundations or Houses of Mercy in eleven locations throughout Ireland and in England and laying plans to go to North America.

That new life grew abundantly and today, Mercy is serving the poor in more than forty countries of the world. A further reawakening to new life occurred in 1994, when Mercy International Association (MIA) was established as a global, collaborative, interconnected and humanitarian response to the needs of the poor and most vulnerable throughout the world.

As expressed in its Vision Statement: *Catherine McAuley, Foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, used her inheritance in service of the needs of her time. Today, Sisters of Mercy, through Mercy International Association, use their resources to respond to issues of Global Poverty.*

### **MIA is deeply committed to two core objectives:**

- Furthering Mercy's outreach to the poor throughout Mercy's ministries worldwide
- Inspiring Sisters of Mercy, our lay Associates and our many Partners in Ministry to continue the works of Catherine in ways which are creative and appropriate to the needs of the world today'

In advancing its first core objective '**Furthering Mercy's outreach to the poor throughout Mercy's ministries worldwide**', MIA is engaged in significant Global Action Programmes designed to help people respond to issues of global poverty. As the chart below shows, these responses are current day creative ways of addressing issues similar to those of Catherine's day

In Catherine's Time	Today for MIA
Care of Vulnerable Women and Children	Anti-Trafficking of Women and Children
Empowerment of Oppressed People	Sustainable development of the Environment
Care of Displaced, homeless, at risk persons	Response to Migrant Crisis
Response to Crisis Events (e.g. cholera epidemic)	Response to Crisis Events (natural disasters)

Formation in the heritage of Catherine McAuley and the values of Mercy is fundamental to MIA's second core objective. ***'Inspiring Sisters of Mercy, our lay Associates and our many Partners in Ministry to continue the works of Catherine in ways which are creative and appropriate to the needs of the world today'***. To develop understanding of the Mercy charism and to promote global interconnectedness, MIA offers extensive leadership training programmes at Mercy International Centre.

- In 2015 MIA provided leadership training at Mercy International Centre to almost 600 of the 400,000 Partners in Ministry, (lay women and men who are ministering in Mercy sponsored initiatives) from countries including Ireland, Great Britain, United States, Newfoundland, Australia, New Zealand, Kenya
- MIA also conducts a Young Mercy Leaders Programme every year and delivers Mercy Leadership Programmes for secondary and college students on request. In 2015, about 500 students from around the world participated in Leadership Programmes and school tours to Mercy International.

### **Advancing Mercy Mission**

In 2012 to secure the future of MIA, a decision was made to conduct a major fundraising campaign, named **Advancing Mercy's Mission**. We at MIA are convinced that fundraising is a way of announcing our vision and of inviting other people into the Mercy mission, in which we passionately believe. The story of the Mercy Congregation began with the meeting of a magnanimous donor and a woman imbued with a vision and a desire to reach out to those in need. Neither could have foreseen the world wide effect of their collaboration that for almost two centuries has touched the lives of millions of people who were poor or sick or excluded.

### **Creating a Collaborative opportunity**

In his book "A Spirituality of Fundraising" Henri Nouwen says that *'whether we are asking for money or giving money, we are drawn together by God, who is about to do a new thing through our collaboration.'* We truly believe this to be so and are confident that the continuance of the mission of MIA and the realization of its core objectives as outlined above, will keep alive the founding spirit of Catherine among people of the world most in need of God's compassion and mercy today. As of old this will require the support of generous donors to make possible the vision and mission of people prepared to continue the work Catherine began.

It was determined that the best way to address this was the establishment of an **endowment fund**. The reason for an endowment fund was to protect long term sustainability since the monies generated by the campaign would remain intact and invested with the resulting investment earnings used to support MIA's annual needs.

However as the campaign continued, it became clear that some donors would appreciate other options beyond contributing to the endowment fund, e.g. direct funding of certain programmes or resources needed by MIA for the enhancement of its ministry.

### **Taking Stock - Mid-way – a time to rejoice!**

At 2015 year end, the campaign has reached mid-way in its efforts.

While acknowledging that it is the providential care of God on whom we rely that accounts for this, there are many people through whom that care has been realized:

- The hardworking fundraising directors, Sr. Mary Waskowiak who was the first Director, followed by Sr. Suzanne Elliott and their extraordinary collaborator Mr. Ron Ashworth
- The committees in the various countries that spared no effort in cultivating donors
- The Leaders of the Mercy Congregation worldwide who contributed generously and who supported the fundraising effort in myriad ways
- The supportive donors, our many lay partners in ministry and Sisters of Mercy throughout the world.
- CCS – the Fundraising Consultancy firm that has given advice, direction and support throughout the campaign.

As 2016 commences it is time to take stock of what has been accomplished in Advancing Mercy's Mission. We can count the fundraising outcome in dollars, pounds or euros and gratefully celebrate that we have achieved 50% of our target figure that will ensure the perpetuity of Mercy's mission. But, we are equally grateful that Advancing Mercy's Mission has generated greater understanding of the role of Mercy International Association in coordinating Mercy led initiatives around the world. This has been a providential outcome that greatly encourages us as we engage the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy.

### **Planning the Future- we need YOU**

The work continues as we engage the second phase. Several initiatives are underway in the United States, Australia, Ireland and England.

To meet our goal, we are inviting all our Mercy family as well as our friends and supporters to join us in this endeavour.

It is our hope to complete the fundraising activities by the end of 2017. We are blessed to be on this journey in the **Jubilee Year of Mercy**. In this Year of Mercy, the symbol of the **Door of Mercy** is very central. The door of Mercy International Centre, the original house established by Catherine, continually opens to provide hospitality, spiritual nourishment and enhanced energy for Mercy ministry to all who enter. The door also opens outward focussing on the needs of the world today and committed to keeping Catherine's vision alive among those most in need of God's compassion.

We are deeply grateful for your donations which have been a great gift to keeping open the doors of Mercy International Centre.

With deep gratitude in our heart for what has been, we look to the future with hope, because we know we can depend on the assistance and support of many future beneficiaries. Remembering again the words of Pope Francis in announcing the Jubilee Year of Mercy: *Mercy is the force that reawakens us for new life and instils in us the courage to look to the future with hope*, we ask you to support the efforts to **Advance Mercy Mission** as it plays its role in ensuring that the force of Mercy is given sway in our world..

*‘Whether we are asking for money or giving money we are drawn together by God, **who is about to do a new thing through our collaboration.**’*

**If you would like any further information please contact:**

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