



## A Celebration of

**The 185<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Founding of the Sisters of Mercy,  
the fruits of the Jubilee Year of Mercy,  
the richness of the Mercy International Reflection Process  
&  
the ongoing call to the Ministry of Mercy**

**Sunday, 11 December 2016**

**Mercy International Centre  
64a Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2**

**Welcome: Mary Reynolds rsm**  
**Executive Director, Mercy International Association**

At the beginning of the Jubilee Year members of the Mercy family gathered at the doors of our sacred spaces to welcome the holy year and the possibilities it held for us. As the year comes to a close, we gather again, this time to give thanks for all we have experienced and shared as we mark the ending of this specially designated time.

We have shared globally in rich and deep experiences: opening our holy doors of Mercy and participating in the electronic pilgrimage with the Stations of Mercy, in the April pilgrimage to Rome, and in the Mercy International Reflection Process. We have opened our holy doors of Mercy, we have walked through the doors, and we have welcomed the many others who have accepted our invitation to come in. In these moments and movements shared together, we have deepened our influence on the globalization of mercy, compassion and the struggle for ecological social justice (to echo Albert Nolan, op). And we are growing into new understandings of contemplative presence in contemplative space – personal contemplation, communal contemplation and global contemplation all interwoven and mutually enriching.

The Year of Mercy comes to an end, but our holy doors of Mercy will never be closed. Today, let our promise be that we will open our doors even wider, that we will walk through them with greater confidence and certainty, that we will invite in so many who are still crying out for justice, and that we will truly treasure the holy ground which holds our doors secure.

(adapted from Mercy Day address by Elizabeth Davis rsm, Newfoundland)

**Opening Song: Healing Balm** (by Peter Kolar ©2004)

*Healing balm, we shall be, for we are steeped in your mercy.*

*Send us out to do your will O God: to be your compassion and your love.*

1. Gentle God, kind and true, you are the source of all that is good.  
You sent your son to be our healing balm;  
in Christ we find forgiveness. [Ref.]
2. Gracious God, we blossom anew, fed by the rain of your endless love.  
Steeped in seas of your boundless compassion,  
we will go forth to be bearers of hope. [Ref.]
3. Healing God, give us strength, to be fountains of justice, springs of peace.  
Let us be your outstretched hand  
to a world that thirsts for your mercy. [Ref.]



## Ends and Ongoing

*A poem by Mary Wickham rsm, ISMAPNG © 2016*

The great door in Rome will be sealed,  
 jubilee revert to ordinary,  
 and the surge of Mercy words subside to quieter waters.  
 But we, who are claimed by the word and carry it as name,  
 we will stir the waters and make yet the ordinary jubilant,  
 since every year is of God's favour, every day waits for mercy.

We will not close the Door of Mercy.

We will stand as keepers, attuned, disposed.

We will hold the door ajar

for the desperate and the disruptive,

the stray and the strange,

the wounded wise and the child old too soon.

They are looking for the door,

waiting by the door,

hoping for the door,

and we must, with them, and for them,

keep faith.

We will not close the Door of Mercy.

There will be room at our inn,

we will make space at the table,

the cooking pot holds ample.

Through the door is feast and safety,

hope and shelter.

My friend, one of the wounded wise, says:

You only have to knock once

and you only have to knock lightly.

The God of mercy, whose door it is,

is always home.

Proclaimed by Jo Kennedy rsm (South Central Province, Ireland)

## Knocking at the Door

*The knocking, sung refrain, question and response are repeated three times.*

### I Stand at the Door and Knock

Sheila Carney, RSM



#### First Knocking

Helen Diviney rsm (International Coordinator,  
Mercy International Reflection Process)

#### Sung Refrain

Áine Barrins rsm:

Who knocks at this Door of Mercy?

Helen Diviney rsm:

Those who suffer in our world today knock on this Door of Mercy:  
The migrant, the homeless, the victims of trafficking and exploitation, those suffering because of war and natural disasters.

#### Second Knocking

Angela Power rsm (South Central Province, Ireland)

#### Sung Refrain

Áine Barrins rsm:

Who knocks at this Door of Mercy?

Angela Power rsm:

The needy within our church, our congregation and our local realities knock on this Door of Mercy:  
Those seeking spiritual refreshment and deeper meaning in their lives; those who feel alienated, excluded, disempowered; those who desire to embrace God's mercy and to dedicate themselves to being merciful with others.

#### Third Knocking

Áine McGolderick rsm (Northern Province, Ireland)

#### Sung Refrain

Áine Barrins rsm:

Who knocks at this Door of Mercy?

Áine McGolderick rsm:

Our exploited Earth knocks on this Door of Mercy:  
Our Earth cries out for sustainable development, action to combat climate change, commitment to protect bio-diversity and commitment to protect clean, unpolluted water sources and supply.

## **Procession**

Led by Áine Barrins rsm  
(Western Province, Ireland)

The practice of *pilgrimage* had a special place in this Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, and it continues to have a special place in the life of this house, Mercy International Centre, where daily people from around the world come as pilgrims. Life itself is a pilgrimage, and the human being is a *viator*, a pilgrim travelling along the road, making our way to the desired destination. May pilgrimage be an impetus to conversion: by continuing to cross the threshold of this and every door of Mercy may we find the strength to embrace God's mercy and dedicate ourselves to being merciful with others as the Father has been with us.

*As the song begins, Mary Reynolds rsm and Helen Diviney rsm lead the procession carrying the Mercy cross and the Paschal candle. They cross the threshold of the main door and all cross the threshold of the inner door and the Chapel door. The procession represents pilgrimage.*

### **Circle of Mercy** (by Jeannette Goglia rsm ©1991)

In Mercy, we touch the hearts of those who are in misery.  
In Mercy, we're touched by them and feel their strength and courage.  
In Mercy, we heal the pain of those who are in sorrow.  
In Mercy, we're healed by them and see the face of hope.

*Ref.: For the Circle of Mercy is timeless, it is Spirit of Life itself  
which roots us in Faith, and lifts us in Hope  
and holds us in God's loving care, and holds us in God's loving care.*

In Mercy, we welcome those the world has left rejected.  
In Mercy, we're drawn within the loving heart of God.  
In Mercy, we forgive the incompleteness in another,  
In Mercy, our sins are healed and we are whole again. [Ref.]

In Mercy, the Spirit Faith will root us in God's Presence.  
In Mercy, the Spirit Hope will lift us out of doubt.  
In Mercy, the love of God will be our joy in living,  
In Mercy, we join with one another on our journey. [Ref.]





Art by Clare Augustine Moore, ©MIA, 2012. Photo: David Knight

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

### **First Reading:**

Proclaimed by Margaret Corkery rsm  
(Provincial Leadership Team,  
South Central Province, Ireland)

### **A reading from selected writings of Pope Francis:**

We need to constantly contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace. Our salvation depends on it.

*Mercy:* the word reveals the very mystery of the Most Holy Trinity.

*Mercy:* the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us.

*Mercy:* the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of ... brothers and sisters on the path of life.

*Mercy:* the bridge that connects God and [humankind], opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever ....

The Holy Door remains open because it is the sign of the welcoming that God himself reserves for us, so also our doors, the doors of the heart — must always be open to not exclude anyone. Not even those who bother me. No one!

**Responsorial Psalm: Pour Out Compassion & Mercy**  
(by Briege O'Hare OSC ©2011)

1. Pour out compassion and mercy from the depths of your heart;  
And give to the poor and the broken, the service of your love.

*Ref.: In so far as you do these holy deeds, with all the love of your soul;  
Then you will resemble me, your God, and I will make you whole.*

2. If you seek out and find the stranger, and comfort the lonely of heart;  
And offer them your friendship, then my justice you impart. [Ref.]
3. So pour out compassion and mercy from the depths of your heart;  
And give to the poor and the broken, the service of your love. [Ref.]

**Second Reading:** Proclaimed by Sheila Curran rsm  
(Congregational Coordinator,  
Mercy International Reflection Process)

**A reading from *Tender Courage* by Joanna Regan rsm & Isabelle Keiss rsm**  
Catherine's absorption in the Word of God, written and incarnate, called her to imitate the example of Jesus in translating the love of God to others. In her experience of her own limitations, Catherine found a God of love, a hidden God, whose healing grace helped her transcend her frustrations, bitterness and weaknesses and enabled her to translate her own pain into a deep compassion for others. In this compassion, she experienced the alleviating effect created by her willing entry into the pain of others.

Catherine somehow grasped intuitively that mercy is gift given in response to need, neither earned nor deserved. She did not shrink from the demands mercy places on whoever would extend it. She knew that rendering the merciful service was not an act of beneficence, but one of gratitude to God for mercy received.

**Gospel Acclamation: Sing Alleluia!** (by Liam Lawton ©2009)

**Gospel:**

Proclaimed by Margaret Scroope rsm  
(Assistant Director, Mercy International Association)

**A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke**

And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?" And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live." But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Jesus replied and said, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.' Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?" And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."

The Word of God.

R: Thanks be to God.

**Reflection:**

*As the musicians play instrumental music, you are invited to reflect on the following questions:*

- ‡ **What do we hope Mercy will open in the coming year?**
- ‡ **What thresholds does Mercy need to cross?**
- ‡ **What door of Mercy can you enter?**



## **Renewal of Commitment**

Led by Mary Kay Dobrovolny rsm & Denise Boyle fmdm  
(Assistant Directors, Mercy International Association)

Call: You are now invited to be guardians of the Door of Mercy, keepers of the in-between place of Mercy.

*Response to each question: 'I will.'*

Will you as doorkeeper hold wide the door to invite Mercy to come in to be with us? *'I will.'*

Will you as doorkeeper hold wide the door to invite those who are hungry, thirsty, imprisoned, sick, strangers, or naked to come in to find Mercy? *'I will.'*

Will you as doorkeeper help us find new ways of being Mercy on an Earth and among a people crying out for justice? *'I will.'*

Will you as doorkeeper guide us into a holy place of contemplation and vision? *'I will.'*

And so let us renew our vows and commitments as Sisters of Mercy and Partners in Mercy.

### *Sisters of Mercy*

**In gratitude for all that has been,  
I come today to renew my religious commitment.**

**Led by the Spirit,  
in Catherine's chapel on this our Foundation Day,  
I say again that:**

**I promise to live the rest of my life in celibacy,  
which involves passion and compassion in all my living.**

**I embrace poverty,  
knowing the abundance of God and living with enough.**

**I renew my vow of obedience, deepening my listening and  
availability to cooperate with God's mission of Mercy in our  
world particularly to those most in need.**

**I do this in union with my Sisters in this Congregation of Our Lady of  
Mercy. May our gracious God give me the grace to live this  
commitment.**



Catherine's ring  
©MIA

## *Partners in Mercy*

**On this Foundation Day of Mercy, and in imitation of Catherine McAuley, a woman who responded to God's call to reach out in compassion to those around her, especially those in need, I wish to answer God's call to me to discover and reveal the loving kindness of God in all the circumstances of my life.**

**I accept the challenge to live the Gospel of Jesus  
And to be a person of Mercy,  
Visible in the world today.**

**Open my eyes to see the suffering  
In the poor, forgotten and marginalized.**

**May the God of all Mercy bless us; and may Catherine the first Sister of Mercy, accompany us and inspire us as we commit ourselves anew in mercy.**

### **Sung Response**

#### **Suscipe of Catherine McAuley**

(by Elaine Deasy rsm ©1994)



Image commissioned by  
Mercy Hospital Iowa City  
© Cloy Kent, 1981

*Ref:* My God,  
I am yours for time and eternity,  
Lord, I am yours forever.  
It is you who must teach me to trust in your Providence,  
Loving Lord.

1. You are a God of love and tenderness.  
I place my trust in you,  
And I ask that you grant me acceptance of your will,  
Loving Lord.
2. Take from my heart all painful anxiety.  
Let nothing sadden me but sin.  
And then let my delight be hoping to see your face,  
God, my all. *[Ref.]*

## Intercessions

**Mary Reynolds rsm:**

At the opening of the Jubilee Year of Mercy, we gathered in our holy places and prayed for the energy and the courage to 'take up the joyful call to mercy' and to respond to the needs of our sisters and brothers. Conscious that these needs continue to call out for our response, we ask once again: *'May we be signs of your Mercy.'*

**Reader:** Maureen Ryan rsm (Southern Province, Ireland)  
Your people hunger for food and love, for education and adequate health care, for freedom and safety. Your people thirst for justice, for clean water, and so we pray... *'May we be signs of your Mercy.'*

**Reader:** Breda Burke rsm (South Central Province, Ireland)  
Your people long to be known, they long for a homeland, for right relationships, for welcome. They long to see your face. Your people suffer from ills of body, mind and spirit. Your Earth suffers from pollution and degradation and so we pray... *'May we be signs of your Mercy.'*

**Reader:** Maoliosa Hearty rsm (Northern Province, Ireland)  
Your people are imprisoned in unjust structures and political regimes, in dangerous relationships, in demeaning work environments. Your people seek compassion, comfort, companionship and counsel and so we pray... *'May we be signs of your Mercy.'*

**Reader:** Cecilia Cadogan rsm (Congregational Leadership Team)  
We come to the end of this Jubilee Year, so conscious of the ongoing and insistent cries for Mercy in our world. For ears attentive to those cries, hearts of compassion and hands ready to respond, we pray... *'May we be signs of your Mercy.'*

**Mary Reynolds rsm:**

Our good and gracious God, as we bring to a close this Jubilee Year of Mercy, we thank you for the insights and graces that have accompanied our observances. May the doors of our hearts, the doors of our lives remain open and ready to be living signs of your welcoming presence. We pray for the generosity and courage needed to enfold your mercy in our world. Our prayer is filled with trust for we know that your love calls forth our action. To this we say: *Amen.*

**Closing Song: Go Light Your World** (by Christopher Rice ©1993)

There is a candle in every soul,  
some brightly burning, some dark and cold.  
There is a Spirit who brings a fire,  
ignites a candle and makes His home.

Carry your candle, run to the darkness;  
seek out the hopeless, confused and torn.  
Hold out your candle for all to see it.  
Take your candle, and go light your world.  
Take your candle, and go light your world.

Frustrated brother, see how he's tried to  
light his own candle some other way.  
See now your sister, she's been robbed and lied to,  
still holds a candle without a flame.

Carry your candle, run to the darkness;  
seek out the lonely, the tired and worn.  
Hold out your candle for all to see it.  
Take your candle, and go light your world.  
Take your candle, and go light your world.

We are a family whose hearts are blazing,  
so let's raise our candles and light up the sky.  
Praying to our Father, in the name of Jesus,  
make us a beacon in darkest times.

Carry your candle, run to the darkness;  
seek out the helpless, deceived and poor.  
Hold out your candle for all to see it.  
Take your candle, and go light your world.

**A Special Thank You to the Musicians**

~ Marie Cox rsm (Northern Province)  
~ Patricia O'Donovan rsm (Congregational Leadership Team)

**Please take some time to**

visit the Icon Exhibition held in the International Room (Floor 1)  
&

join us for refreshments in the Dining Room (Floor -1)