

**Address by Sr Ann Brady rsm, Provincial Leader Northern Province,
at the launch of *A Time for Mercy*, 6 May 2017.**

Dia Dhaoibh a chairde go leir agus failte chuig an cruinniu seo ar on ocaid iontach athasach. Good afternoon to all and welcome to this gathering on this wonderful, joyful occasion. I just thought to begin with the cupla focal, in contrast to a very distinguished visitor to Our Lady's Grammar school in recent days. You have probably read the article in the Irish News, ' DUP Leader leaves school visit with cupla focal,' go raibh maith agat.

We gather to congratulate and rejoice with you Teresa on your giftedness, as we delight in your gift to Mercy and to the wider world. Today as we launch your CD, *A Time for Mercy*, we celebrate and honour the wonder and the gift of music.

Music is an art form, a cultural activity, the medium of music is sound organized in time.

Music making is part of what makes humans human? Humans sang out their feelings long before they were able to speak their thoughts. **Every culture makes music and every past culture has engaged in music.** The voice is presumed to be the original musical instrument, and there is no human culture, no matter how remote or isolated, that does not sing. Singing is ancient and universal. Musical instruments are among the oldest hand-made objects ever found. For example, there are **flutes**, made from bird bone and ivory, which were found in a cave in southern Germany. These are estimated to be **around 37,000 years old** and perhaps even older!

Compare this with reading and writing. The earliest forms of writing are a little more than 5, 500 years old. And many cultures of the world still do not read or **write**, but all peoples make music, and communicate through music.

Scientists have recently discovered that music affects many parts of our brain very deeply (There is a book entitled [*This is Your Brain On Music*](#) by Daniel Levitin. Himself a musician, a neuroscientist and a researcher into how our brain interprets music. But you don't need to be a scientist to understand that music affects us. **Think about singing 'Happy Birthday/ listening to or singing your favourite Christmas song or carol.** What do these tunes bring to mind for you? How do the words and the tune resonate with you? **Each one will be filled with all sorts of memories and feelings** when you hear these tunes—more than if you simply said the words 'birthday' or 'Christmas'.

Music gets under your skin. It creates strong feelings. And it creates strong memories.

Music is a language. It is a language for all humans. It is a language that is there in times and places when and where normal language falls short,

Music says things that cannot be said in words alone. We need music to say the things we cannot say any other way. If there is great joy, we need music. If there is great sadness, we need music. In fact, **we need music whenever we have a great need to say something important.**

There was music at the Berlin Wall on the very day it fell. On that day, Thursday Nov 9th, 1989 people climbed onto the wall and burst into song! Nobody told them to sing. They just did it by themselves spontaneously.

Teresa, we thank you for providing us with opportunity to come together to rejoice and celebrate with you on the launch of your musical composition, this your second CD.

Your first beautiful work Cothu agus Iomlanu (Nurture and wholeness) was launched in 2010. This CD featuring a beautiful set of Mantras, using the words and sayings of our Mercy Foundress Catherine Mc Auley has indeed become a source of nourishment for

the Mercy World and for the wider world ,furthering our understanding of the Spirit and Charism of Mercy.

John O Donohue in his writings offers us this Blessing;

May you have the courage to befriend your eternal longing,

May a secret providence guide your thought and shelter your feelings

May your soul be as free as the ever new waves of the sea

May you succumb to the danger of growth.

May you live in the neighbourhood of wonder.

Teresa, we are so happy and grateful that with a soul as free as the ever new waves of the sea, you have befriended your eternal longing, your longing to use your musical talent and creativity. We give thanks that 'A secret Providence has guided your thoughts and sheltered your feelings' resulting in this Personal Initiative, these lovely compositions a response to the Call of Laudato Si', to hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor, and a response to our Chapter remit to address the hunger for God in society and in planet earth.

Today, it is our privilege, as John O Donohue puts it, 'to live in the neighbourhood of wonder as we anticipate the delights of your more recent composition. 'A Time for Mercy'. We look forward to being introduced to this new CD with texts chosen from Scripture, from Catherine's own Words, from the Mercy Morning and Evening Prayer Book . These texts reveal to us something of the generosity and faithfulness of God's Mercy. Each song seeks to give musical expression to the Compassion and Merciful love of God for all humanity, We are confident that reflecting on the lyrics and savouring the music we will be strengthened in **our** response to the invitation of Pope Frances, that we create a kinder and more merciful world where hope is renewed , love made more tender and forgiveness given and received more readily.

We give thanks to you Teresa and to all who generously gave their time and talents to the creation and production of this inspirational work of art, A Time for Mercy.

And as we move into the programme of the afternoon I pray;

God of Mercy and Compassion,

We thank you for everyone gathered here.

Come fill our lives with your love,

Fill our word and our song with your grace and truth,

Fill this celebration with your presence.

We ask this for your glory and praise.

Through the intercession of Mary our Mother and Catherine our inspiration.

Amen