



Reflections At Opening Of Process Re Exploration Of Mercy Global Presence

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In Jeremiah (29:11), God promises, “Surely I know the plans I have for you . . . to give you a future with hope.” And, so, we begin! We are taking the first steps on a sixteen-month journey, exploring Mercy Global Presence. Our preparations for this journey began with the Mercy International Reflection Process in 2016, the Process which gave birth to the image of Mercy Global Presence. MIRP challenged the Mercy family of Sisters, Associates, colleagues and partners to strengthen our response to the cry of Earth and the cry of the Poor through global contemplation. The MIA *Vision Statement*, in promising to create a Mercy Global Presence, describes the vision this way, “Standing with the displaced, we will model a world of welcome and inclusion. Actively engaged in the protection of our Common Home, we will witness to the sacredness of all creation.” The MIA Board, supported by the Members, has created a way to find new images, new language and new theology in order to deepen our living of Mercy Global Presence.

That way forward is a sixteen-month journey between now and June 2021. Markers for our journey are pointed out each month by artists, theologians, ministers, global thinkers, distinct voices and champions. Among the markers are artworks, reflections, stories and prayer. The first four months, beginning today, will centre on new understandings of “global,” explored through themes of cosmology, integral ecology, deep social change, and incarnation in creation and in the person of Jesus.

Let us reflect for a few moments on cosmos, the theme for our first month. The word Cosmos means all creation, the entire universe, every dimension of time and space (spiritual and material) – the galaxies, stars, planets, black holes, ecosystems, animals, plants, humans, molecules and time. The first act of mercy was recorded in Genesis. God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. Creation had begun! The Muslim spiritual master, Ibn al-‘Arabī, said, “God has ‘mercified’ the universe into being.” The Episcopalian spiritual writer, Cynthia Bourgeault, says, “Mercy is the very heartbeat of God resonant in creation; the warmth that pulses through all things as the divine Mystery flows out into created form.”

Not only has God “mercified the universe into being,” but we know that God sustains the cosmos every moment of every day. We read in Lamentations (3:22-23), “The steadfast love of our God never ceases. God’s mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning.” And Mary proclaims in her *Magnificat* (Lk 1:50), “God’s mercy is from generation to generation.” Elizabeth Johnson, csj, gives a name to this understanding, “A theology of accompaniment holds the faith conviction that God forever companions the world with liberating, saving mercy. The living God, who in the Spirit is already in, with and for all creation, has in Jesus Christ joined the history of the world and participates in its journey as a member of the planetary

community.” This sense of a planetary community, of the sacred communion of all creation, is at the heart of the reality of the cosmos.

God not only mercified the cosmos into being and sustains every day it but continues to create anew. In Psalm 104 (v 30), we sing, “When you send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the Earth.” In *Laudato Si’* (#80), Pope Francis echoes the theme, “The Spirit of God has filled the universe with possibilities and, therefore, from the very heart of things, something new can always emerge.”

Now, enjoy this exciting, energizing, global journey deep into Mercy Global Presence. Seek out the markers. Find your way into a new Earth and a new Heaven!