

# MERCY GLOBAL ACTION NEWSLETTER

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## Special Edition: Mercy Global Action Emerging Leaders Fellowship 2019-2021 (MELF)



### Greetings from the Mercy Global Action Office!

The MELF final immersion took place on the 12th-20th of February and was hosted virtually on the Zoom platform. The theme of the immersion, 'The Fire Within', focused on igniting the living flame of love that burns within us.

Inside this MELF Special Edition, we will explore the inaugural Mercy Emerging Leaders Fellowship Final Immersion and Graduation.



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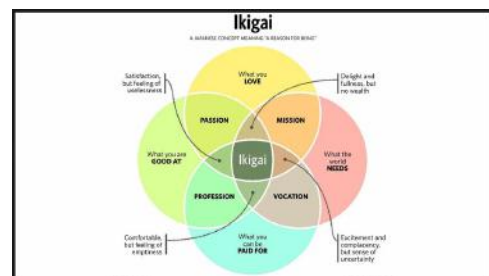
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# MELF Final Immersion

The MELF Final Virtual Immersion took place on the 12th-20th of February and comprised of two Zoom sessions each day over the course of the week. Prior to the final immersion, the MELF team sent each Fellow a package full of items that would be necessary for the immersion experience. Each immersion session was opened with a blessing or meditation led by two of the Fellows. This deepened the sense of presence and connection among the group each day. During the final virtual immersion, the Fellows took part in many activities including:

- *Revisiting Ikigai*

Marietta Latonio re-oriented the Fellows to the practice of Ikigai, the practice of finding one's life's meaning. Many of the group were able to return to their journals from the Cambodia immersion and reflect on a similar guided reflection on Ikigai which Marietta offered back in 2019. Bolstered by meaningful prompts and guidance by Marietta, the Fellows spent some time personally journaling on uncovering what they love to do, what they are good at, and what the world needs now.



- *Women in Leadership Virtual Tour of Mercy International Centre, Baggot Street*



Elizabeth MacNeal, Head of MIA Heritage and Spirituality, led a virtual tour of the famous Baggot St, International House of Mercy. The Fellows heard the stories of Catherine McAuley and about the lives of the very first Sisters of Mercy as told through their relation to various furniture and decorative objects on display in the house. The stories of these wonderful early women of Mercy filled the group with inspiration and hope for making change. The Fellows reflected on the parallels between their lives as fellows and that of Catherine's.

- *Art Journaling with Marianne Hieb rsm*

The MELF team and Fellows were guided in the process of Art Journaling with Marianne Hieb rsm. Prior to the final immersion, each fellow was sent oil pastels and a sketchbook to delve into this process. Marianne provided the context that “we did not journey through the Fellowship in a vacuum, but within complex situations, and personal contexts. The Reflection and Integration Themes invite us to emerge our whole selves into our journaling meditations..”.



To learn more about the final immersion activities, read the Fellow's Final Immersion Reflections [here](#).



**The Mercy Global Action Office will be seeking  
expression of interest for MELF Group 3 in  
December 2021**

At the heart of the Fellowship is the aim to provide opportunities for women to develop and contribute to Mercy Leadership and in turn, extend their sphere of influence. This builds on and ensures that Mercy Global Leadership endures within our Mercy Institutions and beyond.





Artwork by Julia Morisi (MELF 2019-2021)

## Research projects

Over the past 18 months, the Mercy Global Action Emerging Leaders Fellows (Group One 2019-2021) prepared extensive research projects on various Mercy justice issues. The MELF Fellows research presentations took place via Zoom on February 16th, 17th and 18th, 2021. To view the research presentations click [here](#).

- **Theresia Tina rsm (Papua New Guinea) - Where have the Rivers and Forests Gone? Oamug: A Case Study**

This research focuses on how unsystematic expansion of agriculture and housing for survival purposes contribute to the degradation of earth and its resources. While it is an issue for the whole country, the research focuses on one small village called Oamug in the Western Highlands Province as a case study. [Download research](#).

Theresia Tina rsm  
MELF Group 1 Fellow, Papua New Guinea

- **Jemima Walsh (Australia) - Money as Mercy: A guide for the global Mercy community on participating meaningfully in the Impact Economy**

This guide offers an introduction to the emerging 'Impact Economy', and puts forward a decision-making framework for members of the Mercy community to use when considering ways to invest, save and purchase intentionally within this new system. [Download research](#).

Jemima Walsh  
MELF Group 1 Fellow, Australia

- **Tylia Barnes (United States of America) - Cultivating Consciousness: Are you Complicit or a Coconspirator?**

Tylia's Talk will take you on a journey through aspects of historical racism and personal experience. Mercy and the wider community will be invited to cultivate consciousness through a lens of human rights and to become poised innovators of an anti racist culture within its community and institutions. [Download research](#).

Tylia Barnes  
MELF Group 1 Fellow, United States



• Amy Keller (United States of America) - What is Home and How Do We Get There? By looking at the Omaha refugee experience through their responses to the prompt “Home is...” and contrasting those with others in our community, I have created a definition of home that follows a three tier model. By viewing this new definition, within the lens of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, my aim is to show that the journey to find home is just as exciting as the destination itself. [Download research.](#)



**"HOME IS THE PHYSICAL AND INTERNAL SPACE THAT IS POPULATED WITH PEOPLE WHO BRING US JOY. EACH PERSON'S JOURNEY TO GET THERE IS GOING TO BE A LITTLE BIT DIFFERENT."**

Amy Keller  
MELF Group 1 Fellow, United States

• Siobhán Golden (Ireland) - “A Home is Dignity” – A Collection of Voices and Analysis of Women’s Psychological and Emotional Experiences of Homelessness in Ireland By reviewing previous research and listening to the voices of women with lived experience, this study hopes to educate the reader on the gendered experiences of homelessness and share insights on the profound psychological outcomes of homelessness on women’s well-being. [Download research.](#)



**"I ENCOURAGE EVERYONE TO SPEAK INTO THE SILENCE BY RAISING AWARENESS OF THE GENDERED EXPERIENCES OF HOMELESSNESS AND TO ADVOCATE FOR THE HUMAN RIGHT TO ADEQUATE HOUSING, SO THAT EVERYONE'S RIGHT TO LIVE A DIGNIFIED LIFE IN THEIR HOMES IS REALISED."**

Siobhan Golden  
MELF Group 1 Fellow, Ireland

• Anneke Kat (United States of America) - Displacement of the Heart: A Pocket Guide to Gentrification & Community Identity in Philadelphia, USA The goal of this project is to challenge the understanding of displacement through the exploration of the root causes and impact of urban gentrification in the United States. This resource will offer self-reflection activities and a community discussion guide to encourage conversation and grassroots organizing and education on this issue. [Download research.](#)



**"THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION WHEN LOOKING AT GENTRIFICATION IS: WHO IS THIS DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT FOR?"**

Anneke Kat  
MELF Group 1 Fellow, United States

• Anastasia Freeman (Australia) - Photosynthetic Visions Photosynthetic Visions is a research project investigating the climate emergency, plant neurobiology and eco-art therapy techniques to encourage land and plant literacy among participants. A seven-day reflective process was created, using the premise of land as pedagogy and planthropocentric thinking. This process can be used and adapted to deepen relationships with local eco-systems and to conspire with the vegetal world. [Download research.](#)



**"SLOWING DOWN, TENDING TO PLANTS EACH DAY, SEEKING WISDOM FROM THEM AND OUR LANDSCAPES, IS KEY IN THIS PROJECT. THERE IS ALSO THE HOPE THAT WE CAN BRING THIS INTO OUR EVERYDAY LIVES."**

Anastasia Freeman  
MELF Group 1 Fellow, Australia

- Julia Morisi (United States of America) - In Search of Our Stories: Retelling and Reclaiming Women's Leadership in Religious Tradition

This project aims to display and uplift the incredible examples of leadership that women of our traditions can offer us today. I hope it will illuminate the brilliant light and leadership of women in religion, but also promote it. There is so much work still to do. [Download research.](#)



IN SEARCH OF OUR STORIES: RETELLING AND RECLAIMING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN RELIGIOUS TRADITION

Julia Morisi  
Mercy Global Action Emerging Leaders Fellowship  
2019-2021

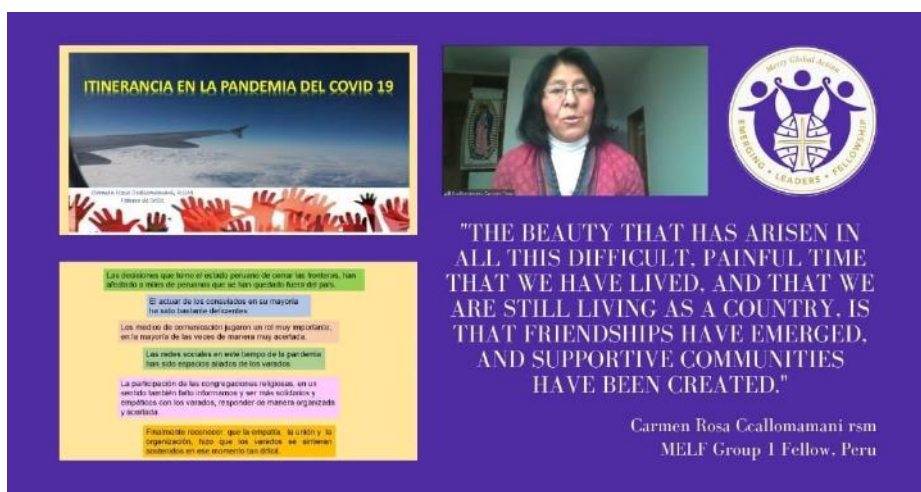
THE ORIGINAL DREAM  
MOTHER EVE  
JULIA MORISI

"I BELIEVE THERE IS AN ABUNDANCE OF WISDOM THESE WOMEN CAN TEACH US ABOUT FRIENDSHIP AND HOPE, ABOUT MOTHERHOOD AND SISTERHOOD, ABOUT STRENGTH AND PERSISTENCE, ABOUT LEADERSHIP."

Julia Morisi  
MELF Group 1 Fellow, United States

- Carmen Rosa Ccallomamani rsm (Peru) Title: Itinerancia en la Pandemia del COVID-19 (Roaming during the COVID-19 Pandemic)

This research is a case study focused on the testimony of five Peruvians stranded in the US during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Through their experiences, the study highlights the dangers they faced, the action of the Peruvian State, and the roles that social media, NGOs and religious congregations played in their journey. [Download research.](#)



ITINERANCIA EN LA PANDEMIA DEL COVID 19

CARMEN ROSA CCALLOMAMANI, RSM  
Fellow de 2020

Las condiciones que formo el estado peruano de cerrar las fronteras, han afectado a miles de personas que se han quedado fuera del país.

El actuar de los consulados en su mayoría ha sido bastante limitado.

Los medios de comunicación pagan un rol muy importante, en la mayoría de las veces de manera muy acertada.

Las redes sociales en ese tiempo de la pandemia han sido espacios donde se han unido.

La participación de las congregaciones religiosas, en un sentido también ha sido importante y que más solididad y cohesión con los viajeros, respondiendo de manera organizada y acertada.

Fuimos reconocidos por la empatía, la unión y la organización, todo que los viajeros se sintieron acompañados en ese momento tan difícil.

"THE BEAUTY THAT HAS ARISEN IN ALL THIS DIFFICULT, PAINFUL TIME THAT WE HAVE LIVED, AND THAT WE ARE STILL LIVING AS A COUNTRY, IS THAT FRIENDSHIPS HAVE EMERGED, AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES HAVE BEEN CREATED."

Carmen Rosa Ccallomamani rsm  
MELF Group 1 Fellow, Peru

## Mercy Emerging Leaders Fellowship Statement 2021:

**"We are a group of intergenerational, intercultural, and interfaith women from around the world who find a common connection in our commitment to live justly and mercifully.**

**As leaders in our local communities, we each represent diverse backgrounds, and we strive to bring our distinct experiences into conversation with the shared work of Mercy.**

**We cherish the longstanding ethical leadership modelled by the Mercy family worldwide, and share a commitment to living out the spirit of Catherine McAuley.**

**As Mercy fellows, we seek out practical solutions to issues of environmental and social justice. In doing so, we encourage and enable our communities and planet to thrive. We will continue to work for the empowerment of others - especially women - to experience full, safe and meaningful lives."**



# MELF GRADUATION CEREMONY



On February 20th, the Mercy Global Action Emerging Leaders Fellows (Group 1) celebrated their graduation via Zoom. It was a wonderful graduation ceremony filled with joy, hope and gratitude for all involved throughout what has been an extraordinary year and a half! At the virtual celebration, we were joined by members of the MIA Board of Directors, Congregational Leaders, staff, parents, spouses, and partners from many Mercy ministries around the world. To watch the Graduation event click [here](#).

The graduation ceremony began with a heartfelt welcome from Sue Clarke, the Presider of Ceremonies and a director of the MIA Board. Sue offered a land acknowledgement and words of gratitude for elders and all indigenous people in attendance. This was followed by some opening remarks made by Berneice Loch rsm, who reminded everyone that this graduation is a great accomplishment after such uncertainty and change in our world due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Later, Suzanne Ryder rsm director of the MIA Board, led us through the invocation.

To deliver a keynote address to the fellows and attendees, Mrs Mary Robinson, the first woman elected President of Ireland, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the current Chair of the Elders, was present. Mrs Robinson has been a passionate advocate for women's empowerment in leadership and has built movements for justice, peace and equality worldwide. To read more about the keynote address see page 7.

Angela Reed rsm, Head of MGA, responded to Mrs Robinson's keynote address by thanking her for being a guiding light for women, girls and those marginalised throughout the world. Sr Angela praised Mrs Mary Robinson for her transformative leadership from the grassroots to the global table and for recognising that society as a whole benefits when women reach their full potential. The keynote address called Sr Angela to remind the fellows that as they graduate from the MELF program, they "walk in the light of many women who have gone before them".

During the ceremony, the Fellows were awarded their MELF Certificate of Completion by Ron Ashworth and Sheila Carney rsm, Chair and Vice Chair of the MIA Board.

Gathered virtually, the Fellows wished to thank everyone who has offered support, encouragement, knowledge, friendship and hospitality during this remarkable experience. During the graduation ceremony, a slideshow of photos of the MELF experience was shared and each fellow recalled and offered their deepest thanks to those whom they have been so blessed to encounter on their journeys.

*"We thank you for walking with us during a year of upheaval and learning. In imparting your gentle wisdom and encouraging us to keep going, you have passed on a spirit of Mercy in a practical, durable sense, and we are grateful."*

They concluded their vote of thanks by holding up their candles to celebrate the light and new wisdom that the new Mercy Emerging Leaders in Group 2 will bring into this hopeful community. To read more click [here](#)

## A GRADUATING FELLOW'S REFLECTION

*"When we first met in Cambodia in August 2019, I don't think that any of us realised the extent to which we would connect with one another, support one another, and feel empowered by one another. We were a group of dreamers who shared a vision for justice and change. Little did we know that we would suddenly become the greatest of friends whose dreams became more achievable when pursued together."*

*The fellows and I have been overwhelmed by the kindness, support and generosity offered by the Mercy Family during our time as fellows in Group 1. We are forever grateful for this once in a lifetime experience. To Angela Reed rsm, Colleen Swain, Marietta Latonio, Cecilie Kern and Nicole Christensen, thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your vision, outstanding leadership, organisation and creativity.*

*Congratulations to all of the MELF graduates!  
It has been a journey. And this is only the beginning."*

# MELF GRADUATION CEREMONY KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY MRS MARY ROBINSON



— **Mary Robinson**  
Chair of the Elders, Former President of  
Ireland, Former UN High Commissioner  
for Human Rights

***“ Investment in the education,  
empowerment and encouragement  
of women and girls is the best  
investment in the world.***

*I'd like to commend Mercy International for this initiative of an Emerging Leaders Fellowship to help extend women's sphere of influence in our world. This is incredibly important but such funded fellowships are all too rare. We are making links now between empowering women and girls and development of communities but it is so much more than that. We need to understand that women's leadership in our world really matters... women tend to lead differently, to be more problem solving, to be more collaborative, to be less hierarchical, and to be more listening.*

***I'm most impressed and also inspired by what each of you has achieved already in your young lives, and in particular, your commitment to the values of justice and mercy.***

*All of you are building on quite difficult situations that you have found in the communities that you are working in but you have the optimism of hope in that sense. We all have to have hope, as well as justice and mercy. I wish our nine wonderful graduates that they continue in their lives paths more encouraged, more inspired, because they have understood that the quality of mercy is very blessed."*

To read Mrs Mary Robinson's full keynote address click [here](#).

To view the Graduation Programme click [here](#).



## ANGELA REED RSM, HEAD OF MGA, RESPONDING TO THE KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT THE MELF GRADUATION



Mrs Robinson your virtual presence here today is an honour and a privilege.

I couldn't think of a more appropriate person to stand in solidarity with and impart such a strong message both in your words and your very being to our women leaders as they bring their Mercy Global Fellowship to completion this evening.



Since I first read your memoir, the story you told of the light in the window has remained with me as an abiding image. In Your words....



*'The idea of the light in the window appealed to me. I had promised, in my acceptance speech, that there 'there will always be a light on at the Presidents House for our exiles and our emigrants'. ..We had a lamp made in the shape of a candle - with no 'off' button – and put it on the window sill of our family kitchen upstairs, which was under the main portico of the house and could be seen from the public road. I hoped that emigrants would learn of the symbol and know that we at home in Ireland were thinking about them, felt connected to them and understood if they were lonely or in need of support'.*

I believe you have opened up this symbol far beyond Ireland and indeed to the world. You have shown solidarity with the marginalized throughout the world, especially women.

As a Lawyer you shone a light on Human Rights, using law as an instrument for social change

As an Irish Politician...you were not afraid to challenge the status quo. It was the light of collaboration where you always sought to build capacity in groups and coalitions and share power with the people, especially women.

As President of Ireland, it was the inspirational light of justice, peace and love that you held up before the nation.

As a Teacher you shone a light on not only Civil and political rights but Economic, Social and Cultural rights, challenging your students to put people and planet at the heart of any solution.

As UN High Commissioner for Human Rights you approached the declaration of Human Rights as a living document, focusing on massive inequality throughout the world, especially for women. You have borne witness to this injustice by being close to the victims and bringing their accounts to the Global Table. You have amplified the voices of victims and alerted the world to what was happening to them, Shining a light on many dark places in the world.



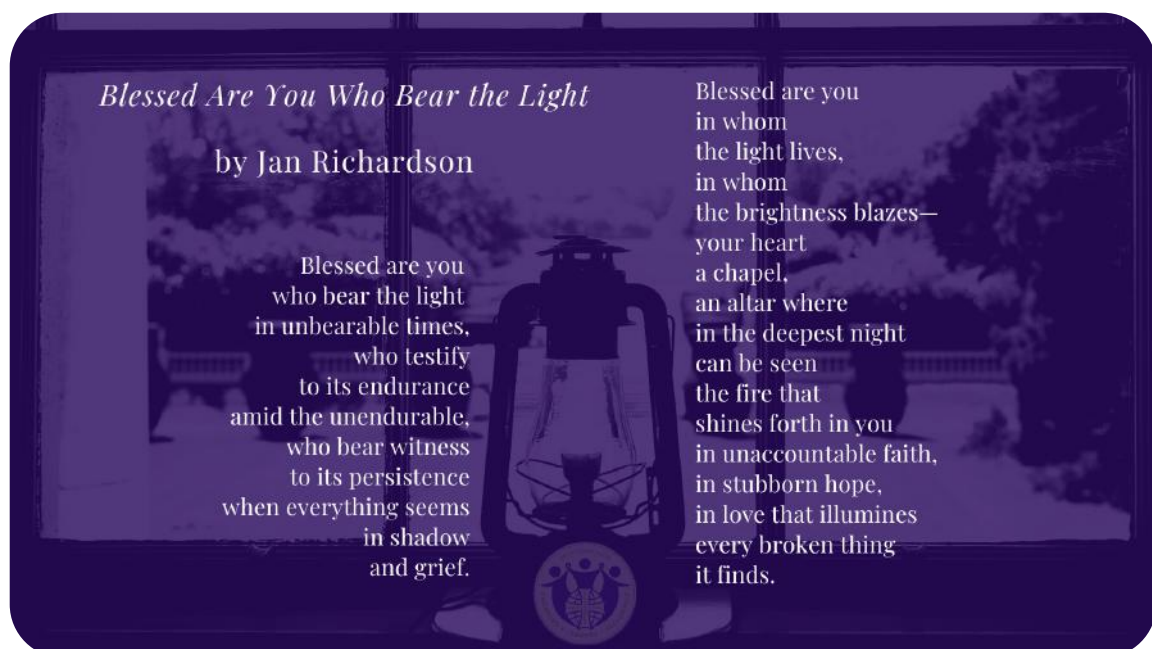
As a Grandmother you established the Mary Robinson Foundation on climate justice, recognising on the birth of your first grandchild the impact that climate change would have on him and all future generations. You then called on the world to look at climate change from the perspective of the poorest, seeking just solutions based on equity and the right to development and recognising that it is women who bear the brunt of climate change.

As an Elder you shine the light of wisdom- the fruit of your experience. With enduring empathy and respect for others, you listen to their stories and affirms their dignity and worth. You continue to challenge the narrative by rejecting short term mindsets and insisting on thinking intergenerationally for the sake of the planet.

Mary, you write of some significant dates in your family. For example, the serendipity of your first grandson's birth on your wedding anniversary, December 12. You have noted that this date is also important to you as it signifies the Signing of the Paris Agreement which you describe as a 'triumph of hope over darkness' for people and planet. For the Mercy World, December 12 marks Foundation Day, the day, our founder Catherine McAuley began her work to address the injustices of her time. I believe your grandmothers name was McAuley. Catherine, like yourself, challenged societal norms, creating a new narrative in which women would come together to make a difference to our world and foster a spirit of Compassion.

As a Woman you have shone a light of exemplary leadership, recognising that society as a whole benefits when women reach their full potential. You foster transformative leadership, from the grassroots to the global table. As we heard today, you identify the challenges women face in leadership and maintain a strong conviction of the need to surmount barriers in order to empower women. You recognise women as agents of change.

To the Fellows, as you leave here today as graduates of the Mercy Global Action Fellowship, you walk in the light of many women who have gone before you. Mary, Today we thank you for the guiding light that you have been and give thanks for your enduring leadership. And I have invited Siobhan Golden, a graduating Fellow, to pray this blessing on you today. By way of inclusion, I ask everyone to extend a hand of blessing and the fellows to hold up their candles."



# Mercy Emerging Leaders Fellowship

## Graduates 2019-2021



**Tylia Barnes**  
**(United States)**



**Carmen Rosa Ccallomamani**  
**rsm (Peru)**



**Amy Keller**  
**(United States)**



**Theresia Tina**  
**rsm (Papua New Guinea)**



**Julia Morisi**  
**(United States)**



**Jemima Welsh**  
**(Australia)**



**Anneke Kat**  
**(United States)**



**Anastasia Freeman**  
**(Australia)**

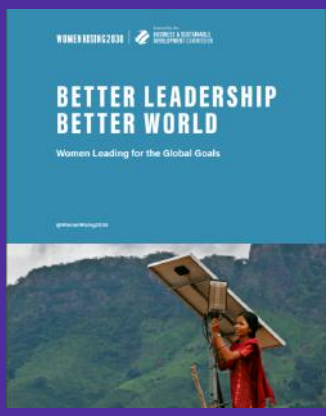


**Siobhán Golden**  
**(Ireland)**

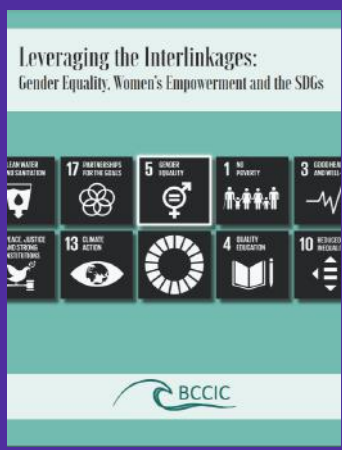


# “USEFUL RESOURCES

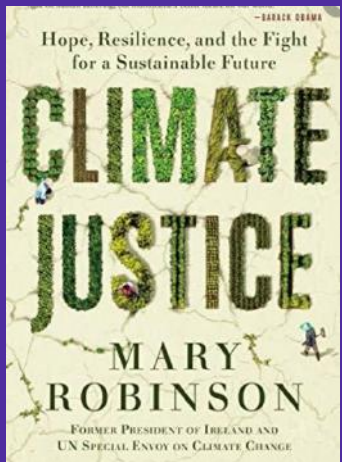
Better Leadership Better World -  
Women Leading for the Global Goals



BCCIC - Leveraging the Interlinkages:  
Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment  
and the SDGs



Mary Robinson - Climate Justice:  
Hope, Resilience and the Fight for a  
Sustainable Future



CSW65 - Report of the  
Secretary General



*MERCY GLOBAL  
ACTION WISHES  
ALL WOMEN OF  
MERCY AND  
JUSTICE A*



● Happy ●  
International  
Women's  
Day!

8th March



Mercy International Association (MIA) maintains a comprehensive and up to date website and produces an informative weekly e-newsletter (MercyNews).

Visit our website to discover more about MIA and our global activities: [www.mercyworld.org](http://www.mercyworld.org)

Subscribe to our e-newsletter to learn about our vision in action and the ministries carried out by our member