



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.

Light and darkness.

The interplay of light and darkness:

“See how quietly the great God performs all His mighty works: darkness is spread over us at night and light returns in the morning, and there is no noise of drawing curtains or closing shutters (Neuman: Letters)

Interior sources of strength and purpose:

“It is not possible to study her letters, the prayers she is known to have prayed, her recorded instructions to the first Sisters of Mercy, her expressed reactions to events of her life or her own actions, without recognising, however fragmentarily, the interior source of her attitudes and actions.....Catherine was deeply engaged, especially in her more mature years, in daily interior dialogue between her grasp of Scriptures, her knowledge of Christian tradition as it was available to her, and her surrounding cultural experience. Hers was a dynamic, embodied theology. The circumstances of her own life and of the society and church in which she lived constantly shaped and renewed her response to the gospel. In that sense she was a contextual theologian”. (Mary Sullivan: *The Path of Mercy* p. 154).

Beliefs and motivations:

- *Her belief that human life is a spiritual journey toward God and centred in God.*
- *Her confidence in the accompanying providence and mercy of God.*
- *Her understanding of Jesus Christ as the self-bestowal of God, and of the gospel as a call to a corresponding human self-bestowal, to a following of God’s generosity in Jesus.*
- *Her faith in and desire to resemble Jesus Christ as the guiding and beckoning example of this God-inspired and God-provided journey.*
- *Her focus on the “cross” of Jesus Christ as the fullest human expression of Jesus’ self-bestowal, and on the ongoing historical invitations to participate in that self-bestowal.*
- *Her belief in the thoroughness of Jesus Christ’s compassionate, even “tender” identification with the “least” - with those who are poor and suffering.*
- *Her focus on God’s mercy as the rendering, in the person of Jesus, of God’s love for human beings, and on human mercifulness as “the principal path marked out by Jesus’ Christ to those who are desirous of following him”.* (Mary Sullivan: *The Path of Mercy* p. 159).

Inspiration of the cross:

“If the entire cross upon which Christ died was sent to this House, how impatient would each Sister be to carry it, and she who was permitted to keep it the longest – would be the most favoured. Far better and more profitable for you to receive with all your heart the cross which God will send you in any form or shape He pleases”. (Quoted Corr. Letter 269 to Frances Warde, May 28 1841)

“Thus we go on.....flourishing in the very midst of the Cross, more than a common share of which has latterly fallen to my lot...I humbly trust it is the Cross of Christ. I endeavour to make it in some way like His – by silence”. (Letter to Frances Warde May 15, 1838).

Letter to Sister M. Elizabeth Moore:

My Darling Sister M. Elizabeth

I did not think any event in this world could make me feel so much. I have cried heartily – and implore God to comfort you – I know He will. This has not been done in anger. Some joyful circumstance will soon prove that God is watching over your concerns which are all His own. – but without the cross the real crown cannot come. Some great thing which He designs to accomplish – would have been too much – without a little bitter in the cup. Bless and love the Fatherly hand which has hurt you. He will soon come with both hands filled with blessings. My heart is sore.....for you.....

I remain your ever affectionate M.C. McAuley (Sullivan Corr. March 21 1840 p. 259)
Light: Letter to Marianne Beckett, an English postulant.

*Tho' so long I've delayed to reply to your note
I never unmindful could be
of the metre so varied – so sweet that you wrote
and kindly to gratify me*

*when not far removed from life's earliest stage
at Rhyming I never could stop
and beginning to feel the pressure of age
I lean on it now as a prop.*

*It affords some support and help on the way
recalling the days of my youth
In which 'twas my pastime, my folly, my play
and so it is still in good truth*

*Of this one poor talent I've made such a hack
That – unimproved it must remain
and ah, when obliged to deliver it back
I'll have losses much rather than gains.*

*This strain would make me very sad
I'll therefore cast it off for ever
Since gloomy thoughts are very bad
The heart from God they often sever*

*I sometimes wish we could form
A little foolish party
who common sense would largely scorn
and aim at laughing heart'y*

*Even now I can select a few
Would suit our purpose well
V- a – J – a – too
M. – A – and I – 11*

*A President we next should seek
of folly a Professor
Try Sister V – t for a week
we'll soon get a successor.*

*Dear Sister Marianne adieu
Since last I wrote – there's nothing new
save Habits, guimpes and veils
which they have brought like any Bee
plaited as nice as you could see
not creeping on like snails*

*I'll conclude with a prayer which I promise to say
from this till we meet – at least twice a day
“May the Spirit of fervor, of light and of Love
which descended from high in the form of a Dove
our dear Postulants visit at this holy time
and prepare them to enter a life so Divine
May the fruits of this Spirit each evil efface
and infuse in their hearts an abundance of grace. – Amen. (Mary C. McAuley)*

