

# Facilitators Guide: Presence to Self & Others

## Guiding Group

The role of the Facilitator will necessarily include organising the group's access at the session to the resources on screen or in print.

A suggested structure for each Session is:

1. Preparation of the Focus Space
2. Prayer
3. Introduction
4. Content Explored
5. Reflection and Discussion
6. Closing

As this is the fourth and final theme of the third Segment, most groups will have already explored the context for *Mercy Global Presence* as “global” (Segment One) and its spirit as “mercy” (Segment Two), and so will be familiar with the process and [the microsite](#).

Whichever presentation you, the Facilitator, or group first choose to engage with, commence your work using the introduction by Elizabeth Davis rsm. Sr Elizabeth commences her presentation by recalling key moments from last month's theme, 'Presence in Community & Ministry'. before beginning her exploration of 'Presence to Self & others' with a prayer from John Philip Newell. She proceeds then to address the theme under four headings: 'Presence to Self & Others', 'Presence to Each Other', 'Reflection on the Culture of Encounter' and 'Presence to Self' before concluding with John O' Donohue's presence-centred blessing. Patricia McMahon rsm and Annette McCartan rsm in their reflective prayer also include this 'Blessing of Presence'.

Elsewhere John O'Donohue wrote: *'Absence is alive with hidden presence, nothing is ever lost or forgotten'*.

[Homelessness](#) is one of the six issues that emerged from the Mercy International Reflection Process (MIRP) under the theme 'Displacement of Persons' and a deep concern for Sisters of Mercy as we have seen already with MGP presentations. Ali Roach rsm, this month's **Grassroots Minister** shares from her lived experience in a day centre in Perth, Western Australia ministering with the homeless, while Siobhán Golden, the current **MGA** intern quotes Jessica Powers who describes personal struggle for belonging as “the homelessness of the soul in the body”.

Edia “Tita” Lopez rsm, this month's Grassroots Minister, is a member of the [Prophetic Voice Commission](#) of the Caribbean, Central America and South America Community of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. The work of the Commission was the featured Grassroots Ministry in 'Faith Traditions and Mercy, the first theme in Segment Two, 'Mercy'.

Once again, we offer three of many possible approaches to using resources from this theme, implementing the suggested structure (nos. 1-6). The approach used will depend on the needs, interests, abilities and situations of the group members. **At this present time, groups that are able to meet are using video conferencing. Our suggested approaches take account of this and of face-to-face-meetings becoming possible again in the future.**

Facilitators may, of course, use their own approach with the resources, or choose elements from these three suggested approaches to create a different approach. At the conclusion of the Session the Facilitator or another group member is encouraged to send on 'what is too good for the group to keep to themselves' to [mgpfeedback@mercyinternational.ie](mailto:mgpfeedback@mercyinternational.ie)

### **Example One: Grassroots Ministry**

The Facilitator organises an online meeting room such as Zoom, Skype or Facetime. If using Zoom, the presentation could be shared using the 'Share screen' function. When face to face meetings are possible again, the Facilitator provides each participant with a print out of the presentation.

The Focus space could be prepared with elements or images that evoke the theme of this presentation.

Commence the Session with the Opening Prayer from the Reflective Prayer.

The Facilitator introduces the session by reading the introduction.

There are two statements in the introduction that summarise this presentation – the quote from Catherine McAuley and the statement from Ali: 'All of my clients have carried the cross of Christ'. Invite the participants to keep these in mind as they journey through the Stations, hearing these individuals' stories of suffering, grief, loss and sacrifice.

Consider inviting participants to read the stations silently to themselves, one at a time, pausing after reading. The Facilitator could announce the title of each station after a set time and the participants then read and reflect on that person's story.

At the conclusion, of the stations, invite participants to say aloud a word or phrase to summarise the experience of 'listening' to these stories. Recall the quote from Dougl's Steere in Elizabeth Davis' introduction: 'To listen another's being into life, may almost be the greatest service that any human being ever performs for another'.

Invite participants to share with the group how their knowledge of homelessness has been impacted by these stories.

Gather up these reflections with the Concluding Prayer.

Conclude the session with the 'Blessing for Presence', holding in it those whose stories have been shared: Suzie, 'Mr Happy', Tammy, Eddie, James, Rodney, Danielle, Emma, Madeleine, Patty, Enid, Louise and Ali.

### **Example Two: Distinct Voice**

The Facilitator organises an online meeting room such as Zoom, Skype or Facetime. If using Zoom, the text and video could be shared using the 'Share screen' function. When face to face meetings are possible again, the Facilitator organises a smart television or a data projector and laptop for the

meeting place in order to screen (on a blank wall or screen) the video and, if thought helpful, provide each participant with a print out of the presentation.

The Focus space could be prepared with elements or images that evoke the theme of this presentation.

Commence the Session with the Opening Prayer from the Reflective Prayer.

It may be beneficial for the participants if the Facilitator could introduce the Session by sharing the work of the Prophetic Voice Commission to which Tita belongs. The Commission was the featured Grassroots Ministry in 'Faith Traditions and Mercy, the first theme in Segment Two, 'Mercy'. Information about the Caribbean, Central America, South America (CCASA) Community can be found on the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas [website](#).

Further background, on Tita's ministry is found in the Global Sisters Report. The facilitator could summarise this information or share the article in full as part of the session before referring to the update given under 'Additional information'

A further aspect of Tita's ministry is her work with youth, shared in the short video (in Spanish) and in text (English and Spanish).

Invite participants to share something they have heard about Tita's ministry that spoke to them and is 'too good to keep to themselves'.

Conclude the session with the Blessing from the Reflective Prayer, including Tita and her ministry as part of that prayer.

### **Example Three: Reflective Prayer**

The Facilitator organises an online meeting room such as Zoom, Skype or Facetime. If using Zoom, the introductory video could be shared using the 'Share screen' function. When face to face meetings are possible again, the Facilitator organises a smart television or a data projector and laptop for the meeting place in order to screen (on a blank wall or screen) the video and, if thought helpful, provide each participant with a print out of the video script.

The Focus space could be prepared with elements or images that evoke the theme of this presentation. Consider creating a cosmic Advent wreath, or using the artwork for it.

Invite three readers to take turns reading aloud the Introduction, pausing after each paragraph to give time for reflection – first on the season, then on time and finally on stillness and expectation.

When ready, play the hymn.

Invite a reader to read the Opening Prayer.

Invite two readers (narrator and Elizabeth) to proclaim the Gospel.

Following a time of reflection, invite a reader to read the poem. Alternatively, two voices could alternate, or five among the group could take a verse each.

After a suitable pause for reflection, play the Magnificat.

Four texts have now been shared in different formats: 'The Visit', 'Mary Visits Elizabeth', 'The Visitation', 'Magnificat'. Invite participants to share in small groups how the hymn 'The Visit' and the poem 'The Visitation' have given them fresh insights into the scripture texts. If participants are meeting on Zoom, breakout rooms would be used for this sharing. After the designated time, bring participants back to the large group and invite participants to share something they heard that is 'too good to keep to themselves'.

Gather up these reflections with the Concluding Prayer.

Conclude the session with the 'Blessing for Presence'. There are ten blessings within it, each of which could be read by a different member of the group.