



MERCY INTERNATIONAL REFLECTION PROCESS

Flaming the Fire of Mercy: Creation Waiting in Eager Longing

MERCY GLOBAL PRESENCE – EMERGING

WHERE THE DREAM BEGAN

During the last week of March this year, the Institute and Congregation MIRP Co-ordinators, the MIRP Guiding Team, Elizabeth Davis rsm, liaison with the MIA Members (Leaders) and Mary Reynolds rsm, MIA Executive Director, gathered at Baggot Street Dublin to reflect on and share experiences, insights and learnings gained during the Mercy International Reflection Process and to formally close the Process.

From that meeting came the report: [Review of the Mercy International Reflection Process: "What has been discovered? What has been revealed?"](#) which was released online to the Mercy world on 21 April and through Congregations and Institutes to all Sisters, partners-in-Mercy and all who engaged in the Process. Co-ordinators from each Congregation and Institute then met with their respective leaders to discuss the report more fully.

Discovered

The analysis of the reports from the 265 groups showed common critical issues, themes and urgent calls for action across the globe. Two key themes had emerged: 'Displacement of Persons' and 'Degradation of Earth'. Actions linked to either or both of these themes were suggested for local, regional, national and/or global levels.

Revealed

The vision statements and recommended actions in the MIRP Report called for transformation through a new theology, new images of God, a new language and new conversations. Among the Sisters and the partners in Mercy, there was an emerging awareness that religious life must have new meaning in a time when there is growth both in cosmic consciousness and in responsibility for care for our common home. While theologians have been writing about these matters for some time with attention primarily to the vows, charism and ministry, the Reflection Process strongly encouraged all Sisters of Mercy and partners in Mercy to become engaged in exploring the ecological reality of the identity and mission of religious life in all its richness and uniqueness. In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis called us personally and communally to an "ecological conversion" (LS, 216-221). For Sisters of Mercy globally, living into *Mercy Global Presence* is one more way of ecological conversion leading to a completely new understanding of not only what Sisters of Mercy do but who Sisters of Mercy are.

WHERE WE ARE NOW

In the months since the Report was circulated, attention has been paid to both what has been *discovered* and what has been *revealed*. Steps have been taken to further nourish participants' experience of the process and to engage all members of the Mercy family in forming a vision for Mercy into the future. This has happened both locally in Congregations and Institutes and globally through MIA. The 'cry of Earth and cry of the Poor' which has been heard by the Mercy world anew has also been evident in the experience and outcomes of Chapters, held over the last few months.

The meeting of the MIA Members and Board in mid-May was a significant event. The MIA Members and MIA Board of Directors endorsed the MIRP Review and the further exploration and development of Mercy Global Presence in all its rich and profound promise. Elizabeth Davis rsm, Mary Reynolds rsm and Anne Walsh were tasked with initiating this.

To maintain the momentum begun by the Reflection Process, in *MercyNews* 'Displacement of Persons' and 'Degradation of Earth' are now used as thematic headings for identifying and grouping resources in the 'Further Resources' section each week. A number of dates in 2017 were identified as 'pivotal moments for global communication and reflection'. As a result, MIA has produced and made available through *MercyNews* and on the Mercyworld.org website resources for:

- [Mercy to earth weekend](#) (23-24 April)
- [Second Anniversary of the publication of *Laudato Si'*](#) (18 June)
- [Season of Creation](#) (1 September – 4 October)
- [Mercy Day](#) (24 September)

The production of resources is now underway for the first World Day of the Poor on 19 November (Thirty-third Sunday of Ordinary Time), instituted by Pope Francis in his apostolic letter *Misericordia et Misera* at the conclusion of the extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. MIA Programs planned for 2018 include the "Mercy to Earth' week-long program.

During August, the Mercy family was invited to provide input into the next MIA Strategic Plan. The first stage involved completion of a survey. The feedback particularly indicated a desire for the MIA Strategic Plan to be influenced by the findings of the Mercy International Reflection Process (MIRP) and the emerging understanding of Mercy Global Presence. As a follow up, the Mercy family was invited to participate in early September in video conference calls to address the question: *In the light of the MIA Vision statement, what priorities might MIA focus on over the next 5 years?*

WHERE FROM HERE – CONTEMPLATIVE ENGAGEMENT

The MIRP Report asked that the ongoing process continue to flow from the grassroots and be "organic and not hierarchical, global but rooted in local realities." The next steps endeavour to be faithful to this spirit and to build on all that has happened since the Report was released:

1. Congregations and institutes whose Chapters or other special gatherings in recent months included conversations about Mercy Global Presence are invited to send a summary of those

conversations to Mary Reynolds rsm by Remembrance Day, 11 November 2017 .
E:director@mercyinternational.ie

2. Congregations and institutes who have begun to implement any of the suggested actions from the MIRP Report are invited to send an update on the implementation to Mary Reynolds rsm by Remembrance Day, 11 November 2017. E:director@mercyinternational.ie
3. MIA will gather the fruits of its conversations with the Mercy family to articulate its emerging understanding of Mercy Global Presence in the context of its new Strategic Plan.
4. MIRP groups that have continued to meet or have met to review progress on their actions are invited to send a summary of their experiences to Anne Walsh by Remembrance Day, 11 November 2017. E:mercyenews@mercyinternational.ie
5. Sisters and partners in Mercy are encouraged to explore one of the three symbols from the Report (the holon, the butterfly or the global heart), to creatively deepen the image (in poetry, in painting, in sculpture . . .) and to forward their artistic work to Anne Walsh by Remembrance Day, 11 November 2017. E:mercyenews@mercyinternational.ie
6. Sisters and partners in Mercy are encouraged to gather in informal groups to explore ecological conversion as it relates to a new understanding of religious life. The fruits of these conversations will be added to the Mercyworld.org website once received. Send these to Anne Walsh. E:mercyenews@mercyinternational.ie
7. MIA will develop a section of *MercyNews* entitled Mercy Global Presence to hold the responses and actions identified above.
8. Based on the outcomes of these initial steps, within the next three months additional steps will be identified.

Catherine said, “Let us take one day only in hands, at a time, merely making a resolve for tomorrow, thus we may hope to get on taking short, careful steps, not great strides.” It is the hope that these careful steps will be taken in the spirit of contemplative engagement and will help bring about a vision for Mercy Global Presence which energizes Sisters and partners in Mercy in wonderful new ways.

Elizabeth Davis rsm, Mary Reynolds rsm, Anne Walsh
Mercy Week
September 2017