

For surely I know the plans I have for you...to give you a future with hope. Jer 29:11

Chimes ~ single gong ~ ripple of a stream ~ meadow ~ morning dew ~ earth after rain ~ shimmering blue/green/purple ~ rainbow ~ spectrum with black and brown and white ~ open arms ~ bird in flight ~ dew drop ~ covenant ~ welcome ~ joy – with these images, the participants at Wellsprings 2018 evoked the sound, sight, smell, shape and promise of Mercy Global Presence! More effectively than any words, these images remind us as Sisters of Mercy, Associates in Mercy and partners in Mercy that Mercy Global Presence is joy-filled, intimate, challenging and life-giving even as we struggle to describe or even recognize it in our midst. How can we find the words, the language or the theology to articulate something so precious? Yet we must find new words, new language and new theology if we are to allow this gift to emerge among us and around us in our own places, in our countries and on Earth.

The [Mercy International Reflection Process](#) gave name to this reality which has long been coming to birth among us. During 2016, the Year of Mercy, five thousand people in forty-four countries shared life experiences, written texts and stories of mercy in small groups and in large groups and generously shared the fruits of those conversations with each other. Mercy Global Presence emerged as an expression of a way forward in a global response to the cry of Earth and the cry of Poor, cries flowing from the degradation of Earth and the displacement of persons.

Since [the Report](#) of that year's work, *What has been discovered? What has been revealed?* was completed, much has happened. The Mercy leaders from the Asia Pacific focused on Mercy Global Presence and asked Adele Howard RSM, to do [a guidebook](#) as a basis for moving forward. Several Mercy leaders indicated that their Chapters had embraced Mercy Global Presence in their conversations and in their Chapter statements. During the past two years, the Mercy World's understanding of Mercy Global Presence has been deepened by the many ministries centered on degradation of Earth and displacement of persons. The new [MIA Vision Statement](#), so beautifully expressed in word and image, is centered on Mercy Global Presence.

Mercy International Association has now developed one further way to engage the Mercy world in global contemplation, moving to shape the new words, new language, new spirituality and new theology. Through *Mercy eNews* and the newly revised [Mercyworld.org website](#), a sixteen-month global exploration of Mercy Global Presence will unfold, inviting the engagement of Sisters of Mercy and partners in Mercy worldwide.

The framework for the exploration will reflect a new unfolding of the four movements in the spiral of the Mercy International Reflection Process: personal experience, social context, link with the tradition and new vision. It is rooted in the conviction that Mercy Global Presence is alive and active in the ministries of all our Sisters and partners in Mercy, in the many connections and collaborations in which we are engaged, and in our increased awareness of the rich diversity among us. Multiple cultures and languages are to be threaded throughout this exploration with special emphasis on the power and promise of intercultural wisdom and energy.

Sisters will be invited to become engaged themselves and to encourage others (Sisters and partners in Mercy) to join them. This engagement will take many forms: designated responders, comments or blogs on the new website, gathering in small groups for reflection, and informal reporting of gatherings and learnings to MIA.

The process will unfold in four-month segments respecting holiday times in the two hemispheres:

- ✓ March to June 2019: an introduction to what is to come
- ✓ September to December 2019: a focus on “global”
- ✓ March to June 2020: a focus on “mercy”
- ✓ September to December 2020: a focus on “presence”
- ✓ March to June 2021: integration and gathering the fruits of the exploration

Each month will bring its own rhythm: an opening video setting the context and inviting engagement; reflections from theologians, artists, grassroots ministers, mercy global action and distinct voices from the Mercy world with opportunities for reflective prayer; and an invitation to engagement in personal reflection, small group conversations, and blogs or comments on the website. Each congregation and institute will be invited to use this exploration as a resource as they live out their unique Chapter statements and congregational journeys. High points in the year will be integrated into the rhythm of the exploration: Easter, Earth Day, Advent and Christmas, Mercy Day, Foundation Day . . . The new MIA Vision Statement, the celebration of the Silver Jubilee of Mercy International Centre and our individual Chapter statements will root us in our Mercy tradition.

“Hurra for foundations, makes the old young and the young merry.” Mercy Global Presence is a new foundation among us. Catherine’s words to us in 1841 now echo in a new way which she could never have imagined but one in which we know she is delighting. May God’s promise to us in Jeremiah be the impetus for our promise given in the vision of MIA: **“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 the sacredness of all creation.”** May the gifts of our Mercy charism and our global presence give us the energy we need to be Sisters of Mercy and people of mercy in our world so **“in need of God’s compassion and Mercy.”**

- Elizabeth Davis rsm

Messages to: [MIRP Continuation Group](#)
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