

# MERCY GLOBAL ACTION NEWSLETTER

MAY - JUNE 2023 | VOLUME 7 ISSUE 4



## GREETINGS FROM THE MERCY GLOBAL ACTION OFFICE!

### • *Goodbye and thank you to Máire Cunningham*

Sadly, Máire Cunningham finished her three-month fellowship at MGA last month to return to her role as a partner with Beauchamps LLP, a law firm based in Dublin, Ireland.

Máire has been an invaluable member of the team for the past three months, Chairing the Water Task Force and leading the creation of the Water Resource Guide for the office. A key highlight of her time was being selected to ask UN Secretary-General António Guterres a question at the Civil Society Town Hall meeting inside the General Assembly.

We want to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to Máire for her dedication, hard work, and unwavering commitment during these months. The warmth and energy Máire has brought to the office will be dearly missed.



Mayet, Máire and Angela in Astoria,  
Queens, NYC.



Máire asking a question to António  
Guterres

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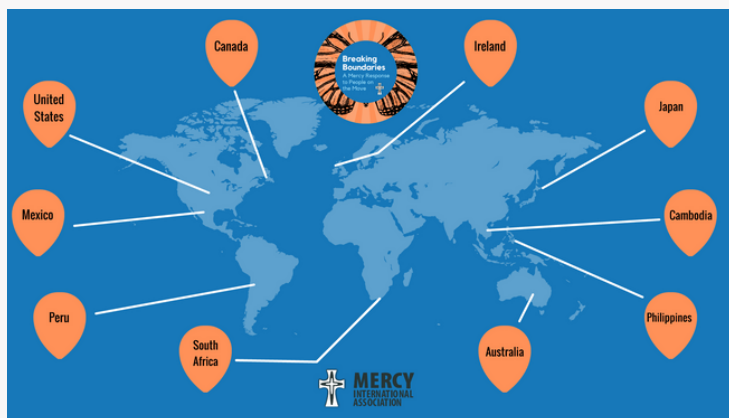
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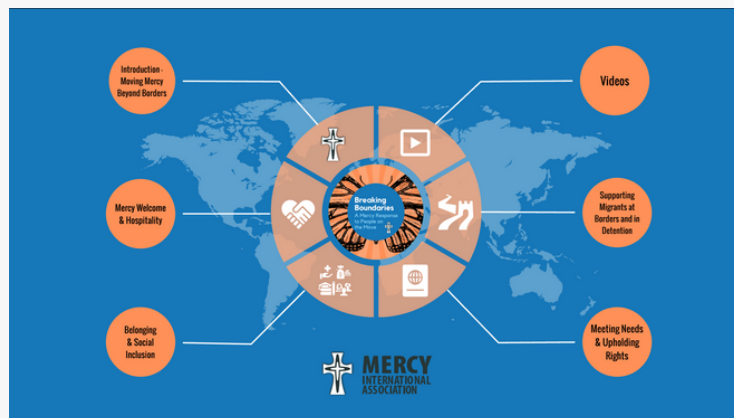
# Breaking Boundaries: A Mercy Response to People on the Move

## • *New Interactive Resources for Breaking Boundaries Publication*

Last year, Mercy Global Action published "Breaking Boundaries: A Mercy Response to People on the Move." It was the result of a year-long process that allowed the Mercy World to reflect on, learn from, and celebrate their involvement with people on the move. Despite the difficulties faced during migration, the Mercy community, including Sisters, Associates, and Partners, promote a culture of encounter that offers support, accompaniment, and enriches our communities. The publication also includes recommendations for government and civil society partners to consider when advocating for the needs of people on the move.



[Map of Mercy survey respondents](#)



[Interactive version of the publication](#)

To enhance your experience with the Breaking Boundaries publication, two new interactive resources are available. The first is an interactive breakdown of the publication that allows you to click through and read. The second is an Interactive Map which displays all the Mercy community organizations that responded to a survey which was used to create the publication. Although the map only includes those who responded to the survey, it is the most up-to-date representation of the communities involved in the Mercy World that provide assistance in migration. These resources aim to help you engage more deeply with the Breaking Boundaries publication.

[View the resources here](#)





# THEMATIC AREAS

## DISPLACEMENT OF PERSONS

- Mercy Highlights the Role of Positive Migration Narratives at GFMD Consultations*

On April 19, MGA's Global Policy and Research Advocate, Cecilie Kern, in her capacity as Chair of the NGO Committee on Migration, participated in the 2nd Government-Led Roundtable Consultations for the 2022-2023 Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD).

The GFMD is a state-led, informal process, which is organized each year by a different host government. It plays an important role in the global debate of civil society organizations and governments about international migration and development.

This year, France, as the Chair of the GFMD, has chosen "the impact of climate change on human mobility" as its overarching topic. This thematic area will be addressed with a cross-cutting approach through the other thematic priorities, which include Human Rights of Migrants, Diaspora, Labour Migration, Migration Narratives and Culture, and Multi-Level Governance.

On behalf of the GFMD Civil Society Mechanism, Cecilie served as a thematic expert on Roundtable 5 on 'Improving the perception of migration in public opinion through narratives, culture, emotion and rational discourse.' She drew upon the experiences of the NGO Committee on Migration's subcommittee on Xenophobia, Racism and Social Inclusion, on Mercy experiences of welcome and hospitality to people on the move, as highlighted in our recent publication **'Breaking Boundaries,'** and on the other experiences of global civil society organizations shared in a preparatory meeting.


### BREAKING BOUNDARIES

## CONTRIBUTIONS OF MIGRANTS

A MERCY RESPONSE TO PEOPLE ON THE MOVE


#### SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

Both low- and high-wage migrant workers bring skills and knowledge to fill labor shortages, addressing market needs and facilitating increased productivity in key sectors. Migrants and refugees also bring new ideas and ways of thinking, contributing to innovation and entrepreneurship.



#### CULTURAL RICHNESS


Migrants and refugees share new foods, music, habits, traditions and beliefs with their new neighbors. Resilient, creative and hopeful, they have undertaken challenging journeys to build better lives, not only for themselves, but for their children and their communities.



#### ASPIRATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

"I want to become a productive citizen of Australia, a person helping other people in this country that offers so much to me and I want to be a person who will leave a positive mark in this world."


Fadi, Iraqi refugee in Australia



#### INSPIRATION & SUPPORT


"Being a Sister of Mercy is an amazing gift as through these many years of ministry a bit on the fringes we have been encouraged, loved, and supported. We are grateful to God, the Mercy Community and our immigrant sisters and brothers."

Pat Murphy rsm & JoAnn Persch rsm, United States



#### TAKE ACTION!

- Reflect on the ways that migrants & refugees enrich your life. What products do you use, what cuisines & music do you enjoy, and what relationships do you have that are thanks to migrants and refugees?
- Advocate for policies that enable migrants to contribute fully to the social, economic, and political lives of your country/community.





# THEMATIC AREAS

## DISPLACEMENT OF PERSONS

- [Mercy Highlights the Role of Positive Migration Narratives at GFMD Consultations \(continued\)](#)



In her remarks, Cecilie called on governments and stakeholders *"to ensure that the language we use and the information we share about who migrants are, why they move, and what they contribute to their communities upholds the dignity and identities of migrants, strengthens social cohesion, and works to eliminate xenophobia and discrimination against people on the move."* [Click here to read the full statement.](#)

As we prepare for the 14th GFMD Summit in early 2024, we are committed to dialogue and sharing of practices in all six of the thematic roundtables. MGA will continue to engage in the GFMD process throughout the year, joining a global network of migrant rights and development leaders advocating for and contributing to the implementation of GFMD recommendations that improve the lives of migrants, their families and the countries to and from which they migrate.

# INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY

[Applications are now invited!](#)



- Do you feel called to respond to the systemic issues of our time?
- Would you like to contribute to the international justice office of Mercy International Association?
- Does working with a small collaborative environment on justice issues at the United Nations excite you?

**If yes, then this internship is for you!** An internship position at Mercy Global Action Office in New York is now open. Applications will be received until the deadline of **31 May 2023**.

This is a volunteer position five days a week for 10 months. A stipend is provided to assist with some food, housing and transport.

[Download the role description here.](#)

Applicants should send a letter of interest and a resume to Cecilie Kern, Global Policy & Research Advocate at [mgaassociate@mercyinternational.ie](mailto:mgaassociate@mercyinternational.ie).



# THEMATIC AREAS

## DEGRADATION OF EARTH



- *April 22nd Mother Earth Day*

The United Nations designated April 22nd as International Mother Earth Day to recognize the importance of the Earth and its ecosystems as our common home that we must work together to protect.

The theme for this year's Mother Earth Day is "Invest in Our Planet," encouraging collective action from governments, institutions, businesses, and individuals to protect and sustain the planet. It builds on the urgency to address environmental challenges, including climate change, pollution, deforestation, and biodiversity loss, which threaten the health and well-being of all living beings.

To address these challenges, environmental education and awareness are crucial. This year's Mother Earth Day aims to promote education and inspire action to protect the environment. Water is one of the most vital resources for life on Earth. The Mercy Water Campaign launched by the Mercy Water Task Force aims to empower individuals worldwide to take action on water-related issues.

The Mercy Water Task Force has developed a comprehensive water guide that includes stories, videos, prayers, and links for further exploration. The guide is valuable for communities and individuals looking to make a difference and protect this precious resource.

As we celebrate this year's Mother Earth Day, let us remember our responsibility to protect the Earth for future generations. By working together, we can create a healthier, more equitable world for all.

Learn more:

- [ActNow](#), a global initiative by the United Nations to encourage individuals to take action on climate change and environmental issues
- Read about the Mercy Water Campaign on the United Nations website [here](#)
- Read the Water Guide [here](#)



# At the United Nations THROUGH OUR ECOSOC LENS...

- *The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)*



Indigenous leaders at the Australian Consulate

We are excited to share some updates from the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII). From April 17-28, the forum celebrated and amplified Indigenous voices and perspectives.

One of the highlights was a session hosted by the NGO Mining Working Group, where Indigenous leaders from the Amazon in Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, and Peru shared their stories and solutions. The forum discussed the importance of Indigenous Peoples bringing their voices to the forefront and their hopes for future partnerships and advocacy.

The walls of the UN have also been adorned with Indigenous art from Australia, sharing personal, historical, and ancestral stories of the land.

Another important session was hosted by the Australian Consulate, where Indigenous perspectives on health and climate change in the Blue Pacific region were discussed. The Indigenous Peoples Organisation-Australia also held a powerful event on Voice, Truth, and Treaty, discussing the upcoming Australian referendum on an Indigenous voice to parliament.



NGO Mining Working Group  
Breakfast with Indigenous Leaders  
from the Amazon Region

Indigenous Australian leaders called for continued support for the Voice to Parliament. The Voice, which is part of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, proposes the establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to ensure that Indigenous people have a say in policy and legal decisions that affect their lives. The proposed referendum would amend the Constitution and add a new chapter entitled "Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples," establishing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice, which may make representations to the Parliament and the Executive Government of the Commonwealth. The proposed advisory body will provide independent advice to the Parliament and Government, be selected by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people based on the wishes of local communities, be representative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, gender-balanced, and include youth. According to the Australian Reconciliation Barometer, 80% of the general Australian community and 86% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people believe that the creation of a national representative Indigenous body is essential, and 79% of the general public and 87% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people believe that such a body should be protected under the Constitution. Indigenous people's right to have a voice at the highest levels of law in Australia must no longer be subject to political maneuvering by successive governments.



To learn more about the Uluru Statement of the Heart and why constitutional recognition is necessary, Mercy Global Action has created a guide you can read [here](#)



# MELF LEADERSHIP GENERATING PROJECT

- *What Mercy Women Leaders are Reading!*

MGA's Leadership Generating Project team (Colleen Swain + Jemima Welsh) are currently working on a position paper on Mercy women's leadership. This paper seeks to honour the legacy of the Sisters of Mercy around the world and explore contemporary understandings of, and hopes for, Mercy leadership in areas such as global justice advocacy, women's rights, education and the Catholic church.

In writing this paper, we hope to highlight the myriad stories of amazing leadership work undertaken (sometimes very quietly) by vowed and lay women of Mercy. We also aim to equip MGA with the knowledge to speak at the United Nations and other international platforms about the value of Mercy women's leadership.

At the beginning of this project, we sent out a survey to Mercy women leaders around the world, inviting thoughts and stories. One question in particular asked: If you had to recommend a book/movie/podcast/poem/article to an emerging Mercy leader, what would you choose and why?

To leave you feeling inspired, rejuvenated and proud to be part of this global Mercy community of women leaders who do things differently, we share with you below a snapshot of some of the answers we received. We hope you enjoy seeking out a couple of these resources!

- I love the movie **The Inn of the 6th Happiness**. We must never allow others to deny us the ability to be our best and most productive selves. The heroine, Gladys Aylward, believed in herself, even when others did not.
- **Patient Trust, Prayer of Teilhard de Chardin** - because we often want leadership to happen faster than is reasonable. A Plastic Ocean documentary - because I think we need to make stronger commitments to our relationship with earth. 13th documentary - because institutional racism exists and we in Mercy need to keep it at the forefront. Peter Sidebotham's Come, walk on the water with me prayer - because we all need a little inspiration to do the impossible!
- **Braiding Sweetgrass** by Robin Wall Kimmerer, to see how the author so beautifully integrates Indigenous wisdom with scientific knowledge. It's a reminder that we all come with much experience and wisdom to share for the greater good and we need to bring our full selves to our work



- **Just Mercy** by Bryan Stevenson. Unless we walk in the shoes of the ones suffering, we cannot change them. If we want to help the suffering, we must be close to them.

- Glennon Doyle's podcast **We Can Do Hard Things**. Her most recent book *Untamed* is also a phenomenal read that showcases how we should consistently let others down before we dare let ourselves down. I think this style of leadership is revolutionary, particularly since I was raised to believe that I had to strive for perfection and that is not attainable.



- **Drawdown and Regeneration** by Paul Hawken. These demonstrate how leadership/education of women and girls are in the top 5 actions required to reverse global warming and build resilience in unstable times.
- **The Isabel Dalhousie** novels of Alexander McCall Smith- depicts a main character who tries to live with integrity and kindness. Low key but interesting depictions of ordinary life.
- I like the work of Margaret J. Wheatley - **Who do we Choose to Be?** and other leadership books of her authorship. The recent work of Dr Martin Shaw (UK) - a notable academic in myths and legends and wilderness experience who has recently converted and been baptised to Catholicism.
- In the aftermath of the Vatican investigation of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, the sisters who had been in leadership within the Conference during that time collaborated on a book on which they told the story of how they chose to move through that time. The book is called **However Long the Night** and it is edited by Annmarie Sanders, IHM. It is a magnificent story of leading with power and graciousness and mercy of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. [ie](http://ie) to include your recommendations for emerging Mercy leaders!

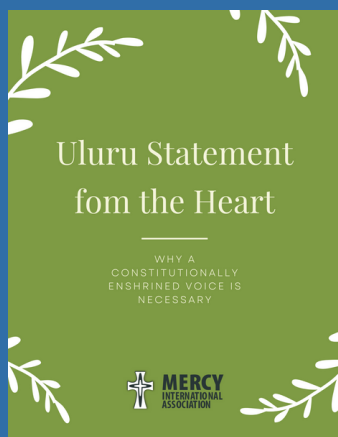


- **It must be The Path of Mercy** by Mary C. Sullivan
- **A Man for All Seasons** movie about Thomas Moore. I'd recommend the necessity of standing alone against the prevailing culture. This culture can be congregational or the social culture of the particular country at a particular time. I would recommend a book, *The Road Less Travelled* by Scott Peck. The reason is, a leader needs to find her own road and be enabled to make good judgements after ensuring that she has the facts.
- This may seem like a trivial response, but the animated movie **Soul**. It is about presence, acting while you have the chance to act, and living the life you have - not the "dream" life you don't have .... the secret to happiness and fulfilment.

Is your favourite book/movie/podcast that you would recommend missing? Contact Jemima Welsh at [jemimawelsh@mercyinternational.ie](mailto:jemimawelsh@mercyinternational.ie) and/or Colleen Swain at [colleenswain@mercyinternational.ie](mailto:colleenswain@mercyinternational.ie) to include your recommendations for emerging Mercy leaders!



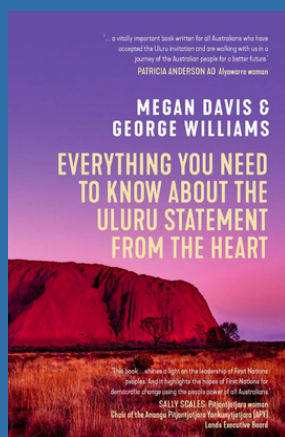
# “USEFUL RESOURCES



[Read our Guide to the Uluru Statement from the Heart](#)



[Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption by Bryan Stevenson](#)



[Everything You Need to Know About the Uluru Statement from the Heart by Megan Davis and George Williams](#)



## UPCOMING EVENTS & INTERNATIONAL HOLIDAYS

- **May 12th - International Day of Plant Health**
- **June 5th - World Environment Day**
- **June 8th - World Oceans Day**



Mercy International Association (MIA) maintains a comprehensive and up to date website and produces an informative fortnightly e-newsletter (MercyNews). Visit our website to discover more about MIA and our global activities: [www.mercyworld.org](http://www.mercyworld.org)

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