

## Comments on the Mercy International Reflection Process

This is a *Kairos* moment for Sisters of Mercy in all forty-four countries in which we live and minister. This is such a blessed moment because this is the Year of Mercy following the Year of Consecrated Life and because we have the opportunity to reflect together deeply on matters of great importance through the Mercy International Reflection Process. This reflection process, flowing through the year from 08 December 2015 to 12 December 2016, will help us bring together our lived realities expressed so profoundly during our LACC meeting by the representatives of each of our countries and the new understandings of cosmology spoken about so gently and passionately by Gail Worcelo, sgm in her sessions with us. It is a flexible process which invites us to create small groups of Sisters and partners-in-mercy to come together in a number of meetings during the year to explore the connections among new cosmology, ecology, eco-justice and social justice and to consider the impact of such connections on our lives and our ministry.

The process, which comes to us from the work of liberation theologians, has four steps with each step taking us deeper into a spiral. At the heart of the spiral is the belief first articulated by Leonardo Boff, "The cry of the earth and the cry of the poor are one." Step one asks us to share our lived reality and then choose one example from that reality to be the focus of our reflection during the next three stages. The reality chosen will reflect either the cry of earth or the cry of the poor or both. In step two, we look at all the critical factors which have created that reality or have influenced it. In step three, we explore the ways in which our tradition (e.g., scripture, words of Catherine, liturgy, spirituality, theology) has intersected with that reality either in strengthening it or being a factor in its creation. At the end of step three, we begin to articulate a new vision which flows from our reflections thus far. At step four, we imagine together implications either for new ministry (or action) or for changes in our existing ministry. As we finish each step, we send a sentence or two about the fruits of our reflection to the global team at MIA. The global team will send back a compilation of the responses from the forty-four countries. The numbers of participants and the numbers of meetings are flexible. What is essential is following the four steps in order, sending responses to the global team and completing the process by 12 December 2016.

The process is supported by coordinators for each congregation/institute, facilitators for each small group and the global team. There are many resources in Spanish and in English available on *Mercy eNews* and at [www.mercyworld.org](http://www.mercyworld.org) for all participants. These resources can be accessed by clicking on the Mercy International Reflection Process logo.

It is absolutely essential that we have small groups reflecting in the countries of the Caribbean and Latin America since you represent 25% of the total number of countries in which we minister and because you bring a special voice which will be lost if you do not participate. The process we are using was born in Latin America; the critical analysis of step two has been used for many years in Latin American and Caribbean countries. Your countries bring a richness and a depth which will significantly weaken the process if your voice is not present and will significantly strengthen the process when you participate.

In his *Prayer for Earth* at the end of *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis speaks well to the heart of what we want for our reflection process, "All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. . . Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light." May we be blessed as we deepen our sense of seeing Mercy and being Mercy in new ways in this Year of Mercy.

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