

Praying together as Mercy Day dawns anew

Nga mihi atawhai - greetings to all in Mercy! Always a red-letter day on our calendar, Mercy Day this year looms larger than usual, as Sisters of Mercy around the world count down to a special celebration to mark 20 years since Catherine's House reopened as the centre of Mercy International Association. MIA's current administrators have reminded us that Catherine and her contemporaries prepared for major events by praying the two Thirty Days Prayers – one to Jesus, the other to Mary – every day for a month.

MIA has adopted the prayer, written by Australian Sister of Mercy Mary Wickham and reproduced below, with an invitation to all sisters and companions in Mercy to pray this together in the 30 days from August 25 to September 23. We add our voice to theirs in extending this invitation, to all who regularly read this column, to pray this prayer wherever you are, united in your concern for one another and 'for a world in need of God's compassion and mercy' (MIA Vision Statement).

In New Zealand, there is an added reason for uniting in prayer, as the Sisters of Mercy gather for their five-yearly Chapter, a week-long gathering that opens on Mercy Day in Auckland. Sisters from throughout the country, and some serving in Samoa, Tonga, Chile and Australia will meet to renew their commitment to God's mission and to their Mercy charism, and to elect a Congregation Leader and leadership team.

As part of their continuing goal to strengthen their relationship with Companions in mission, they have invited their national mission personnel, chairpersons of Mercy boards, principals of Mercy colleges, CEOs and managers of

Imaging Mercy Today

*IRISH-BORN
Sr Maureen
O'Brien of
Onehunga
with tiles
from Catherine
McAuley's
house in
Baggot
Street.
The tiles
will form
part of the
focal point
at next
month's
Chapter of
Nga Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa Sisters of Mercy New Zealand.*



Mercy ministries to join them for part of one day during their Chapter.

Even though Aotearoa and the islands of the South Pacific are about as far from Ireland as one can go, we experience a powerful link to Catherine's original house. It has nurtured Mercy ministries across the world, and revitalised sisters and companions alike in the Mercy charism.

Certainly, sisters from New Zealand have continued to play a key role in establishing and maintaining MIA, ever since Elizabeth McCaver returned to Ireland in 1991 after years as bursar of the former Auckland Congregation, to take on the role of finance manager and facilities planner for converting Baggot St from a convent to Mercy International Centre.

Mary Hanrahan served as MIA director for four years; Ethel Bignell was MIA administrator for several years; Anne Campbell has recently spent a term as president of the MIA Mercy Leaders and Denise Fox is a director on the MIA board.

Local sisters have served on the team which staffs Mercy International Centre, or have spent short spells as volunteers, helping the team with the smooth running of the house. And many of us, both sisters and partners in mission, have spent blessed days at Baggot Street, absorbing the spirit and drinking from the fountains of mercy which are the legacy of Catherine and her contemporaries.

Today, as members of this global circle of Mercy we continue to draw on the witness of those remarkable Mercy women and on the depth of their courage and faith, to take Mercy where it waits to go in the world of our day. A focus at the Chapter next month will include some tiles recovered from renovations at Mercy International Centre. They were tiles on which Catherine once walked, in her now-famous boots which took her through Dublin's streets to wherever her generous heart led her. Standing in her stead today, the question we ask is where does her charism lead us now? As we join in prayer, counting down to a brand new Mercy Day, may the Spirit open our hearts to the prompting of God's own grace.

- Dennis Horton

Prayer for Mercy International Association

God of the immense universe,
God of each human heart,
We thank You and we praise You.
We are people from many parts of the world -
diverse of tongue, talent and place -
who pray together as
friends of mercy and
friends for mercy.
We are united by a spirit and a story
born in a house in Dublin,
now spread to the outer reaches of the earth
and the inner recesses of the heart.
As friends in mercy,
united in that spirit and story,
we commit ourselves to
preserving the best of the past,
fostering the best of the present,
and shaping the best for the future.
We pray in the name of Jesus,
with the help of Our Lady of Mercy,
and inspired by the life of Catherine McAuley.
Amen.

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