



Mercy Northeast is a bimonthly publication for Northeast Community Sisters of Mercy, Mercy Associates and Companions in Mercy. Send comments to: agaffney@mercyne.org.

Northeast

The Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
Albany ■ Connecticut ■ New Hampshire ■ Portland ■ Providence ■ Vermont



Present and past teachers, child care volunteers, and friends of the Manchester Immigration Project gather to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the program. **Front** (from left): Lorraine Fortier, Sisters Mary Sears, Janice Turner, Lolita Charleston, Bonnie Granfield, Anne Vaccarest, Gloria Boisclair. **Back** (from left): Sister May Cronin, Sister Anastasia Smith, Sister Janice Loiselle, Doris Boyle (partially obscured), Sister Ellen Kurtz, Associate Nancy Flaherty (partially obscured), Sister Felicia McKone, Ellen Scanlon, Sister Madonna Moran, Annette Boucher (partially obscured), Sister Irene-Marie Pelland, PM., Sisters Joan Winn, Patricia Randall, Joyce Scott (partially obscured)

Manchester Immigration Project Marks Fifth Anniversary

On Tuesday, March 29, 2011, the basement of St. Anne/St. Augustine in Manchester, New Hampshire, was brimming with excitement, smiling faces, good food and even... a kazoo chorus! What was all the fuss about? The nearly 50 people assembled there had gathered to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Manchester Immigration Project, a ministry providing English as a second language (ESL) and citizenship classes to area immigrants, mostly women, from the Sudan, Congo, and Somalia.

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Northeast Associate Council Sponsors Day of Reflection on “The Well of Mercy”

“When you find a well, and you will one day, drink deeply of the gift within.”

—Macrina Wiederkehr, OSB – “On Being a Well”

Sister Lindora Cabral, Northeast Community president, led the reflection on the theme of “The Well of Mercy” when sisters, associates, and companions gathered on April 9 in Windham, New Hampshire, for the Day of Reflection sponsored by the Northeast Associate Council. Associate Rowshan Nemazee, facilitator for the day, noted that it was the first time the Northeast Community associates had created a day for all those who are part of Mercy life in its various forms – sisters, associates, and companions.

Sister Lindora, the day’s presenter, provided a well of time and space for the 120 attendees to reflect on those who are wells of inspiration for them and what qualities they have. She then asked them to think of how they could be wells to others, and, working together, what wells of Mercy there could be to help quench a thirst in the world. Participants reflected individually, taking advantage of the beautiful grounds and weather, and also worked in groups at tables, giving them the opportunity to meet new people.

Lindora encouraged the table groups to generate ways sisters, associates, and companions could work together to be a well of Mercy by targeting an issue that links to the *Direction Statement* or the Critical Concerns. Some of the ideas that surfaced in the groups included being wells of Mercy for Earth, for women, and for victims of violence. The Northeast Associate Council collected all the ideas and will seek opportunities to bring the Northeast Community together as a well of Mercy.



Sister Lindora Cabral delivered the keynote address. Photos: Sister Kathleen Pritty



120 members of the Northeast Community (sisters, associates, and a companion) gathered for the day of reflection, sponsored by the Northeast Associate Council.

Leadership Team Message



Mercy Rehabilitation at Mount St. Rita enjoys a rich history of providing post-hospital rehabilitation and successfully returning individuals to independence. Pictured here is staff person Jennifer Larrusso and a patient in the recently renovated Therapy Room.

Three Diamond Ratings for Mount St. Rita HealthCentre

Mount St. Rita Health Centre in Cumberland, Rhode Island, was again in the news for receiving accolades, this time from the Rhode Island Department of Health (DOH). In the recently announced results from the DOH's 2010 Nursing Home Satisfaction Survey (www.ri.gov/press/view/13706), Mount St. Rita's was the only facility in the state to receive three-diamond ratings (the highest available) in all resident and family satisfaction categories (10 in all). Coming on the heels of the news that Mount St. Rita's (and Warde Health Center in Windham, New Hampshire) were included as five-star facilities (the highest overall ranking) in the *U.S. News and World Report* listing of best nursing homes in the country, this latest achievement is further acknowledgment of the dedication and commitment to the mission of Mercy of the entire Mount St. Rita staff.

Dear Sisters, Associates and Companions,

As we contemplated the rich readings of the Easter Season, especially the journey to Emmaus, we were reminded of our own journey during this past year. We have been navigating our way through many processes. First it was the Apostolic Visitation and all that it entailed. Next we engaged in the preparation for our own Assembly and election of new leaders. Then we moved to the election of delegates for the Institute Chapter and to participation in the Loop processes to prepare us for our Discernment Chapter. We also received the Institute Accountability Report with the opportunity to participate in mega conference calls to discuss the document with the Institute Leadership Team. Then we participated in our own Mercy Circles process. Throughout these processes many recurring themes emerged: our Critical Concerns and Mercy identity, which came out of the 2005 Institute Chapter; financial concerns; Mercy spirituality and the call for opportunities for retreats that will enable us to deepen our own spiritual life and our sense of Mercy mission. We are left with many questions. What has our reflection taught us? Where is it leading us? How is it shaping our sense of mission and ministry for the future? What are our learnings? Are we being asked to do something very different as we go forward as Northeast Community and as Institute? We have come to realize that it is through contemplation and dialogue that we will come to understand where God is leading us.

In April the leadership team accepted a bid from the Aresco Construction Company to complete the Mercy Center project at Madison, Connecticut. Work is expected to begin on May 1, with asbestos removal and the razing of the two buildings identified for demolition. Then the renovations will begin. Programs will continue at SeaScape during the construction phase and the "Mercy on the Road" programs will continue as well. The whole process should take a year to complete.

The second planning meeting for Mercy Farm was held in April. Sisters Holly Cloutier and Leslie Porreca shared what they have been doing since the fall when they moved to Benson, Vermont. One of the first things they shared with us is that it has been a long winter with lots of snow that literally made them housebound. They have made many contacts with the local community of Benson and have begun research and preparation for beekeeping, have built a chicken coop, and have begun some gardening. They are looking for volunteers to do a variety of tasks. An open house is planned for the fall.

Sister Julia Mary Werner gave the team a retreat day at Mercy Farm in April. Gerry Sullivan and Jill Gemma attended with us. Our day centered on the Easter readings and the role of discernment in our lives.

As we prepare for the feast of Pentecost, may the Holy Spirit guide us in our planning and deliberations, helping us to integrate the many processes in which we are involved that are leading us to reach out to poor and disenfranchised persons as Catherine did, but in 21st century ways.

In Mercy,
Sister Kathleen on behalf of Sisters Lindora, Donna, Pat, and Marie



Wisdom Women



Sister M. Patrick Burke was born in Dover, New Hampshire, one of four children of a loving, happy family. She started first grade at St. Mary's in Dover, a Mercy school, and went all through school there. After high school she worked for five years, and entered the community in 1951. She loved working with young people, and was happy to begin teaching at Star of the Sea School in East Boston, Massachusetts. She taught in Berlin and Manchester, New Hampshire, then returned to East Boston for 10 years. She was principal at St. Mary's School in Claremont, New Hampshire, before returning to Massachusetts to be director of Marian Court Secretarial School (now College). In 1977, she went to St. Ann School in Gloucester, Massachusetts (her "second home"), and remained there until she retired in 2002. When the principal at Immaculate Conception School in Newburyport, Massachusetts, asked her if she would like "a little job" at the school, she agreed, and is still working as an assistant there. About retirement she says, "I tried that once but it didn't work." Patrick is grateful for the support and love she has received within the community. "I'd do it all over again," she says.



Sister Mary Garrett Fitzpatrick grew up in Houlton, Maine. She enjoyed "happy associations" with the Sisters of Mercy there while studying at Madigan Memorial Hospital School of Nursing. She entered the community in Portland in 1943. Her dream of doing missionary work was first realized when she spent three years at the Passamaquoddy Indian Reservation before returning to Madigan Hospital. In August 1971, she went to Portland's mission on Mangrove Cay, Andros Island, Bahamas, where she had a clinic. A doctor came once a week from South Andros by ferry to the public clinic. During the week, many people would bypass the nurse at the public clinic to go to Sister Mary Garrett. She also made home visits. Her greatest joy was assisting in childbirth, and she was called at any hour of the day or night when a woman was in labor. She often worked by the light of a kerosene lamp.

In 1978, Sister Mary Garrett returned to the motherhouse to be the nurse director of the infirmary. After retiring from nursing, she volunteered as a minister of the Eucharist at hospitals in Portland. She now resides at Portland's Frances Warde Convent.

MERCY

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Submissions for the next issue are due the 15th of the month after the month of this publication.

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Correction: In the photo caption on page 1 of the printed edition of the March 2011 issue of *Mercy Northeast*, Sister Marianne Read's name was spelled incorrectly.

Students Pledge to Educate Others through Nature Experience

Excerpted from a post on April 1, 2011, on Sisters of Mercy "Connect with Mercy" blog by Sister Mary Pendergast. To read other personal stories from Sisters of Mercy, please visit www.sistersofmercy.org/connect.

Earlier this term, Salve Regina University in Newport, Rhode Island, offered an "Awakening the Dreamer/ Changing the Dream" symposium as a one-credit course. Twenty five students participated in the symposium and squarely faced the issues of our day on the environment, spiritual fulfillment, and social justice.

The students then self-selected a project for bringing awareness to middle and high school students, to the Salve Regina community, or to any group through an Outward Bound-type of experience in nature.

Sisters Nancy Audette and Mary Pendergast created the course work and facilitated the symposium experience. After taking a global footprint test, students were shocked to find that if everyone lived the way they do, it would take four, five, and even six Earths to support their lifestyle. Many students commented that they were not aware that things are so serious and pledged to rethink many common actions and to educate others about the urgency of the crisis.



Sister Nancy Audette facilitates a small group discussion with students. Photos submitted by Sister Mary Pendergast



Salve Regina University students present their group work during a one-credit "Awakening the Dreamer/ Changing the Dream" symposium.

Native American Immersion Experience on Indian Island, Maine for Sisters, Associates, Companions

An opportunity to deepen an understanding of a 2005 Institute Chapter critical concern – **racism** - by journeying with people of another culture and becoming aware of the effects racism has had on their lives.

The experience on the reservation will include:

- communal prayer, reflection, quiet time in the beauty of the Island
- cultural experiences such as language, drumming and dancing, art, native food
- presentations on Penobscot history, government, and spirituality
- story of Sisters of Mercy presence to indigenous people in Maine



June 11 – 15, 2011 or September 17 – 21, 2011
Arrival 3:00-3:30 pm Saturday – Dinner at 4:00 pm
Departure 11:30 am Wednesday
8 persons per Experience
(Application deadline: 5/25 for June session or 8/29 for September)

Where: Sisters of Mercy Residence on Indian Island
Presenters: Penobscot and Passamaquoddy Tribal Members
Coordinators: Sisters Suzanne Lachapelle & Judith Oliver
Cost: **\$100** (includes accommodations, food, presentations, and program materials)

For more information or an application, call Sisters Judy and Sue at 207-827-2746.

Sisters from Northeast and South Central Communities Visit Outreach to Haiti Ministries in Port au Prince

Photos and article provided by Sister Dale Jarvis

On March 24, 2011, Sisters Jill Weber (South Central) and Dale Jarvis (Northeast) traveled to Port au Prince, Haiti. Jill, a physical therapist, was returning to Haiti to help people who had lost limbs or sustained other types of injuries in the earthquake of January 12, 2010. Jill worked with Linnette, a woman who was the cook at the Mission House of Hospitality and lost her leg when an oven exploded during the earthquake. Despite her injury, she helped save two others who were trapped in the collapsed building for over 11 hours.

Dale traveled as a member of the board of trustees for Outreach to Haiti, a new ministry sponsored by the Diocese of Norwich, Connecticut. Outreach to Haiti is the result of the merger of Hospice St. Joseph and Haitian Ministries. Sister Ann Weller, CSJ, was the founding director of Hospice St. Joseph where Sister Ellen Flynn, a Sister of Mercy from the Northeast Community, served for over 13 years. While in Haiti, Dale visited the education, health care, and child care ministries sponsored by Outreach to Haiti.

Over 300 children, teenagers, and young adults are in the education program. The sponsorship covers the cost of tuition, books, medical examinations, vaccinations, dental care, and emergency medical aid. Some of the children are at Hospice St. Joseph each afternoon and take advantage of the feeding program offered there.

Health care is at the heart of the mission. For many years, there has been a primary care clinic—with pharmacy and laboratory—and a nutrition program at the Christ Roi campus. The Sister Ann Weller Clinic, staffed exclusively by Haitian medical professionals, treats about 6,000 people annually. Children receive their polio and other childhood vaccinations as part of the program. In light of the recent cholera epidemic in Haiti, Outreach provides clean water at the Christ Roi campus, through the Sunspring Water Purification System.

Another important program sponsored with the help of Outreach to Haiti is one that addresses the needs of the

many orphans in Haiti. In 2007, UNICEF estimated there were 380,000 orphans in the country, which had a population of just over nine million at the time. Since the January 2010 earthquake, the number of orphans has skyrocketed, but official numbers are hard to find. One orphanage that both Dale and Jill visited was Le Foyer des Filles de Dieu (The House of the Girls of God, also known as Paula's orphanage). It was an overwhelming experience to see these happy children compared to the many that still live in tents and go hungry.

Speaking of her experiences,, Dale said: "To say my heart was moved while witnessing the poverty, violence, and constant rubble in the streets would be an understatement. To witness the work of the people in Haiti to better themselves was even more moving. It is my hope that, through the work of so many like those who work with the Haitian people in the Outreach to Haiti, life will be better for some, in spite of the overwhelming hardship and crushing poverty."

For more information on the work of Outreach to Haiti and the many works of mercy done by these dedicated people, go to: www.outreachtohaiti.org



Some of the children who take part in the feeding program offered at the Hospice St. Joseph each afternoon.



Sister Dale visits with children at Le Foyer des Filles de Dieu (a.k.a. Paula's Orphanage).



Sister Jill Weber (SouthCentral) examines Linnette who lost her leg when an oven exploded during the earthquake in Haiti last year.



Architect Mark Humphreys; Principal Sister Martha Mulligan; Capital Campaign Co-Chairs Roseanne (Grinsell, '77) and Sam Simmons; and Construction Manager Peter Fiore atop the second floor addition in early December. Photo courtesy of Lisa Lydon

Progress on Mercymount Middle School Facilities

Since breaking ground in the summer of 2010, the expansion project at Mercymount Country Day School (MCDS) in Cumberland, Rhode Island, has been making steady progress. The project focuses on additional space for middle school students in grades six through eight. The building project, titled "Building on Top of Excellence," is comprised of four classrooms which will serve as homerooms for grades seven and eight. One of those classrooms is a science room with a prep/storage area plus an outside space for experiments and gardens on a rooftop deck. There will be a computer lab/meeting room for use specifically by middle school students and teachers. A new stairwell offering access from the cafeteria level to the new complex will be installed, as well as an elevator and a ramp that will ensure accessibility for all to the second floor and new rooms. Other enhancements include solar panels on the roof, a skylight in the center hallway, restrooms, increased locker and storage space, and a small prayer room.

The capital campaign committee has been hosting socials to meet with and inform the current parents about the project. A direct mail campaign is being used to inform alumni and friends of the school. The architect for the project is Aharonian and Associates of Lincoln, Rhode Island, who also designed the original addition and renovation project in 2004-06. Nationwide Construction of North Smithfield, Rhode Island, is the builder on contract for the project.

By Lisa Lydon, director of development at Mercymount Country Day School.

Mercy High School Holds Retreat Day

Earlier this term, Mercy High School held a school-wide Retreat Day. The theme of the retreat, "We've Got the Power," captured the day's focus on forgiveness, healing, and hope. The retreat was planned and led by student Peer Ministers, a team of seniors who share their gifts, talents, and Christian faith with members of the Mercy community in the areas of prayer, liturgy, and community service.

Keynote speaker for Retreat Day was Immaculée Ilibigiza, a survivor of the 1994 Rwandan genocide and author of *Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust*. Ms. Ilibigiza, regarded as one of the world's leading speakers on peace, faith, and forgiveness, has been recognized and honored with numerous humanitarian awards, including the Mahatma Gandhi International Award for Reconciliation and Peace and the American Legacy Magazine Women of Strength and Courage Award. Her message to the Mercy students was to find strength through love and forgiveness: "You love because you have it in your heart. You don't love people because they deserve it. You love because they are human beings, because they are creations of God."

Throughout the retreat day, students met in discussion and activity groups led by Peer Ministers to reflect on the messages that they heard. According to one student participant, "Retreat Day 2011 was unbelievable! I think that the theme of forgiveness was very crucial. It showed us how important it is to forgive others. Immaculée was such a beautiful speaker with a story I'll never forget. She was a life-size example of how crucial forgiveness is."



Mercy High School Peer Ministers present gifts to Immaculée Ilibigiza. (Left to right) Sister Mary McCarthy, Mayrose Gravalec-Pannone, Immaculée Ilibigiza and Sara Gmyrek. Photo courtesy of Jennifer Kensel

Northeast Community Sisters Recently Honored in Connecticut and Maine

Sister Mary Healy, DSW



At a special award ceremony and luncheon on February 18, 2011, Sister Mary Healy, DSW, was named "Employee of the Year" at the Donald T. Bergin Correctional Institution (Bergin CI), a minimum security facility in Mansfield, Connecticut, that serves as a pre-release center for approximately 1,000 male inmates.

Mary began her prison ministry at Bergin CI in 2002, after 20 years in the Greater Washington, D.C. area. While there, she was, among other roles, the director of the Washington Office on Haiti and the creator of the Women to Women project, a women's solidarity program linking groups of women in Haiti with women's groups in the U.S. She has coordinated numerous delegations to Haiti (including fact-finding, educational, and solidarity delegations) and has been an accredited election observer in Haitian national elections. As chaplain at Bergin CI, her primary work has been to make arrangements for weekly worship services and to prepare spiritually enriching opportunities for the inmates. Since approximately one-third of these men identify themselves as Catholic, Mary works to provide them with an environment that allows them to grow in their faith. She also serves the general spiritual and pastoral needs of all inmates, regardless of religious affiliation, and is part of the four-member Religious Services Unit at Bergin CI which was named "Unit of the Year" for 2010-11. She visits each of the 13 dormitories weekly, offering a gentle, supportive presence, answering questions, and making appointments for spiritual direction or pastoral counseling. She offers an open-ended prayer group twice weekly and facilitates one of two faith-sharing groups. Mary also meets with new inmates weekly and provides opportunities that will encourage participation in educational, vocational, and addiction recovery programs.

One project she has developed is especially dear to her heart—a spiritual library, now amounting to more than 300 books, that allows inmates the opportunity to re-visit and reflect on the lessons shared in Bible study and daily Christian living. Since it is the chaplain who informs inmates of family illness, death, or other difficult news, Mary has also initiated a practice of accompanying inmates to deathbed or funeral home visits, each of which must be done only with a correctional officer and without any family presence. She then is ready to provide grief counseling to families, if necessary. She pays similar attention to staff members and their families in times of loss or sadness, visiting hospitals or attending funerals, often on "her own time."

Mary's sustained witness to the tender mercy of God and to a future filled with hope and joy earned her this special recognition from her peers (Employee of the Year award recipients are peer-nominated). In the citation, she was commended for her sisterly, personal gifts (including her sense of humor) and was described as being "the most caring, dedicated person" her peers at Bergin knew. The citation spoke of her "selflessness" and availability to inmates and staff alike.

The Northeast Community congratulates Sister Mary on this recognition of her service and dedication to the call to be Mercy in the world.

By Sister Dolores Liptak

Sister Edward Mary Kelleher



On April 10, 2011 — a beautiful, sunny, spring day — Sister Edward Mary Kelleher's Retirement Celebration was held at St. Maximilian Kolbe Church

in Scarborough, Maine. More than 500 students, parents, alumnae, faculty, staff, board members, religious, friends, and family gathered to celebrate her three-decade commitment to the young women of Catherine McAuley High School.

Homilist Father Steve Concannon captured the congregation with his tribute to "a woman who has given her entire life as an exemplary witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ." The Sisters of Mercy, with over 100 present, serenaded the parishioners with a rendition of "Our Lady of Mercy" as the gifts were presented by Sister Edward Mary's twin brother, Edward, and grandniece, Cora. The liturgy closed with a touching send-off from Sister Edward Mary herself in which she extended her gratitude to "Almighty God for his 30-year blessing... to the McAuley family for their source of daily strength... and to all for sharing their lives and friendship" with her, and asked "God's blessings upon one and all this day and always." Immediately following the Mass, those in attendance had the opportunity to reminisce with Edward Mary and wish her well. Many of the crowd gathered in the event room afterward to share stories, smile over old photos, and sample delicious food.

This joyous event in the spirit of Mercy will be remembered for many years to come. The McAuley High School family and the Northeast Community thank Sister Edward Mary for 31 dedicated years of educating, caring, loving, and shaping the lives of young women. Father Concannon, in his homily, noted that "the witness of religious life" could be expressed in Nobel laureate Dag Hammarskjöld's well-known statement: "For all that has been, thanks; for all that will be, yes."

**By Eileen Brown, director of advancement,
Catherine McAuley High School, Portland, Maine**

Social Media: Quick Tips on Keeping Up with Mercy...Digitally!

You hear about it all the time – social media – but what is it, exactly? And, even more importantly, how can you plug in? The short answer is that “social media” is just a catch-all term to mean any way that people can connect, interact, and share things with one another on-line. That could mean posting a video, commenting on a web log (“blog”) entry, or sharing a link to a photo album with friends.

Did you know that the Institute Communications Office has a dedicated manager of social media? That’s right. Her name is Aesah Javier and her responsibilities are focused on maintaining and expanding all of Mercy’s social media channels. Not sure what those are? Check out the summary below:

Mercy’s Social Media Vehicles

• Facebook (www.facebook.com/MercySisters)

- ✓ “Like” us and visit our page often.
- ✓ Comment on or “Like” posts that we share.
- ✓ Email Aesah (ajavier@sistersofmercy.org) with any news you’d like to share on this page.

• YouTube (www.youtube.com/MercyConnect)

- ✓ Visit our channel.
- ✓ Think about a video you’d like to see or create (2-3 minutes max.)

• Mercy Connect Blog (www.sistersofmercy.org/connect)

- ✓ Subscribe to the blog or visit at least twice a week to read new posts.
- ✓ Think about writing a blog post about your experiences with Mercy.

• Twitter (www.twitter.com/sistersofmercy)

- ✓ Follow our feed to keep updated on news about our Critical Concerns.
- ✓ Have questions about Mercy’s social media vehicles?
Email Aesah at ajavier@sistersofmercy.org.

What Can I Do to Be Part of Mercy’s Social Media Presence?

One way that you can help spread the word about Mercy’s social media presence is by adding our social media information to your email “signature.” It could look something like this:

Website: www.sistersofmercy.org | Blog: www.sistersofmercy.org/connect

Facebook: facebook.com/MercySisters | Twitter: [@SistersofMercy](https://twitter.com/SistersofMercy)

YouTube: www.youtube.com/MercyConnect

Email program settings are all a little bit different, so if you’re unsure how to add this information to your signature (or how to create a signature), please email Angela Gaffney (agaffney@mercyne.org) for help.

Social media is really just a conversation. If you like telling others about Mercy and sharing the experience of the Mercy life, then please visit one of the social media channels and give it a try.

Help keep the conversation going!

Development Hosts Facilitated Discussion with Mercy Sponsored Ministries

On Thursday, April 7, 2011, the Northeast Community’s Development Department hosted a day-long discussion in Windham, New Hampshire, with the executives and fund development professionals of the sponsored ministries throughout the Northeast Community. Professional facilitator, Sandra Del Sesto, led the group in a discussion that included a review of fund development for the Northeast Community and its future long-range strategic direction, as well as its strengths, weaknesses, and areas of opportunity.

The main purpose of this gathering was to begin the process of defining a mutually supportive fund development and resource sharing plan for the Northeast Community and its sponsored ministries. In addition, the meeting participants also began identifying resources and services that could be provided by the Community’s Development Office to support the sponsored ministries’ fund development efforts.

Continuing this forward momentum and as part of the Community’s fund development work, the Community’s Development Department will begin hosting quarterly meetings with the sponsored ministries. The first meeting will be held this summer.

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Sandra Del Sesto, meeting facilitator
Photos by Doreen Tucker

Sisters of Mercy speak out on the Death Penalty Debate in Connecticut



On Tuesday, April 5, several Sisters of Mercy in Connecticut attended a press conference given by representatives of numerous religious denominations speaking out against the death penalty in advance of the hearing before the Connecticut Judiciary Committee on SB 1035 -- An Act Repealing the Death Penalty. (from left) Sisters Pat Colla, Patty Cook, Peggy Luby, and Carmela Garofalo. (This letter sent to the Connecticut General Assembly by the leadership teams of the six religious congregations who sponsor The Collaborative Center for Justice in Hartford, Connecticut, is printed below.) Photo submitted by Sister Nancy Audette.

To: Members of the Connecticut General Assembly

From: Daughters of the Holy Spirit, Leadership Team; Daughters of Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Leadership Team; Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame, Leadership Team; Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambery, Leadership Team; Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Northeast, Leadership Team; Connecticut Province of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, Leadership Team

Re: Abolition of the Death Penalty in Connecticut

Date: March 4, 2011

We, the undersigned, are the leadership teams of the six religious congregations who sponsor The Collaborative Center for Justice in Hartford, Connecticut. As women in leadership, we represent almost 1,000 Sisters and Associates, who are members of our respective religious communities. As women religious, we are committed to working on social justice issues that impact the poor, the marginalized and the victimized in Connecticut. It is this commitment that compels us to write and sign this letter urging you, our State legislators, to engage in an honest and open debate on SB 1035 - An Act Repealing the Death Penalty.

We acknowledge the horrific violence that caused unimaginable pain to Dr. William Petit. We empathize with the Petit and Hawke families who have experienced this tremendous loss, but the issue of the death penalty does not revolve around one family, nor should it be continued because of one truly heinous act. We believe it is time in Connecticut to look objectively at this issue of state sanctioned execution, and to debate the commonly held argument in support of the death penalty, i.e., the death penalty is a deterrent to violent crime, with the considerations being proposed by those who would abolish the death penalty, i.e., the disproportionate manner in which the death penalty is imposed; the inherent violence connected with the act of execution; the psychological trauma experienced by the victim's families as they endure the trial and countless appeals connected to the judicial process that hesitates to execute an individual regardless of the heinous act for which they have been found guilty; and finally, the legal cost, absorbed by the State, to prosecute and defend during the appeals process.

We are especially concerned for the families who are deprived of the opportunity to begin the grieving and healing process, so necessary if they are to move on with their lives. To help these families, we urge you, our legislators, to divest yourselves of the emotions that cloud the issue surrounding the death penalty, and discuss rationally this law which allows the State of Connecticut to execute a human being. In place of the death penalty, we support a judicial policy of life in prison without the possibility of parole. Such a policy would satisfy the demand for justice, and be devoid of the element of revenge.

We add our voices, and those of our membership, to the voices you have already heard asking you to consider abolishing the death penalty in Connecticut. The abolition of the death penalty has too long been part of our State's legislative agenda. It is time to abolish it and join the other States who have had the courage to move in this direction.

Development Hosts

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(from left): Susan Jenkinson, director of sponsorship, Northeast Community and Rosie Connors, board president, McAuley Ministries, Providence, Rhode Island

“We are looking to foster a collaborative approach to fund development with all the ministries, as well as provide them with the resources and capacity building to assist them in becoming self-sufficient,” says Robin Cabral, director of development. “In addition, moving forward we would also like to give the ministries the opportunity to share success and connect and network with each other. Opening up the lines of dialogue between the two entities is essential to this end.”



Margaret Downing, principal, Catherine McAuley High School, Portland, Maine; Charles Frey, executive director, Mercy Center at Madison, Connecticut; Joanne Colucci, manager of individual giving, Northeast Community Sister Irene Nerney, special gifts officer, Northeast Community

Manchester Immigration

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Started by Sister Anastasia Smith, Sister Irene-Marie Pelland, PM, and the late Sister Esther Norton, the Manchester Immigration Project holds classes every Tuesday and Thursday and also provides day care services for the children of students. Since the ministry’s founding in 2006, 178 students have enrolled in both citizenship and ESL classes and 40 have gone on to become U.S. citizens. What makes this ministry particularly effective is its focus on women who, without an option for child care, would be otherwise unable to attend the classes. Further, by offering the classes at no charge and aiding with a portion of the \$675 in fees required to apply for U.S. citizenship, the Manchester Immigration Project makes English language skills and, ultimately, a path to citizenship within reach of those who would otherwise be unable to afford the associated costs.

Sisters and associates have been involved in teaching and child care since the beginning of the ministry. “We also have the help of many lay volunteers who give their time and talent to assist in this much-needed project,” says Anastasia.

In addition to a slide show of photos from the project’s last five years, the celebration included a festive buffet of sweets and the presentation of a floral bouquet to a beaming and grateful Anastasia as she surveyed with a teacher’s pride a roomful of past and current students.



Sister Anastasia Smith, students Nydeng Mieu and Rejina Jau, and volunteer teacher Associate Nancy Flaherty. Nydeng and Rejina were the first students to register with the Immigration Project in 2006 and are still taking classes.



Kadiatu Mackie, a woman from the Ivory Coast and a student in the Manchester Immigration Project, became a U.S. citizen on April 22, 2011 at the courthouse in Concord, New Hampshire. Kadiatu, pictured here with, from left, Sisters Joyce Scott, Anastasia Smith, and Mary Sears, was the 40th participant in the Immigration Project’s five-year history to become a citizen.



Congratulations to the Catherine McAuley High School (Portland, Maine) Varsity Basketball team, the 2011 Girls’ Class A State Basketball Champions and recipients of the Good Sportsmanship Award. Pictured here with the Gold Ball trophy is the team after its 39-23 victory over Hampden Academy on March 5, 2011, McAuley’s first Class A state championship since 2003. Back row (from left): Sadie DiPierro, Nina Davenport, Alexa Coulombe, Molly Mack, Allie Clement, Mary Leasure, Kathryn Liziewski. Front row (from left): Hannah Cooke, Kayla Daigle, Olivia Porch, Rebecca Knight, Jackie Welch. Photo courtesy of Eileen Brown

Mercy Association: Changing Lives and Making a Difference

At an event on April 5, 2011, three women spoke to prospective associates in Newington, Connecticut, about how being an associate changed their lives.



Maryann Boord told the group that being an associate nourishes her as she hears of the experiences of others and realizes that they share the charism of Mercy. Maryann and her husband were co-directors of St. Joseph Hospice in Haiti for two years; now she is on the board of directors for St. Vincent de Paul in Middletown. In both she has provided a prayerful Mercy presence. That prayerful Mercy presence was recognized in her town when she was asked to say the opening prayer at a Memorial Day event. Mercy drew Maryann because she recognized qualities she shares with Catherine, including her sense of fun and her affinity for correspondence. Her many years of political leadership included hand-written notes of congratulations to citizens of all ages in the town.



Trudy Carroll and her husband, Bill, have been associates for seven years. Trudy spoke of how being an associate has helped her to see with the eyes of Mercy. "I have come to realize that it has had a profound effect on how I experience life," she said. "A greater awareness and deeper understanding of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy have helped me to view life with a new eye and a new heart." With this vision, Trudy sees ordinary events as opportunities to be Mercy, whether helping her mother-in-law, distributing communion, or shopping. For Trudy, being a member of a cluster of sisters and associates has been life-changing.



Andrea Minelli, a spiritual director and an associate for two-and-a-half years, came to association through Mercy Center in Madison. She was impressed with Catherine McAuley, whose original ideas mirror the current associate reality. When Andrea made her first covenant, she felt a sense of home and realized she had been doing Mercy her whole life. Being an associate has helped her to find the spirituality she had been seeking. She has experienced unanticipated benefits, she said. "I was surprised by the sense of fun and amount of support I found. Being Mercy wherever I am has deepened and enriched my life. I can't imagine not being a part of Mercy."

By Kathy Swift

Mercy Investment Services Launches Human Trafficking Initiative



Imagine coming to America, hoping for a land of freedom and success. Instead, your employer requires you to work long hours under threats of deportation, without breaks, and makes you sleep on the floor. Even worse, imagine being held against your will and sexually exploited, as your abductor sells you to any number of the thousands of visitors attending major sporting events or large conferences.

With more than 12 million human trafficking victims around the world, stories like these are all too common in the both the United States and worldwide. As part of the concern of the Sisters of Mercy for women and children, Mercy Investment Services, the socially responsible asset management

program for the Sisters of Mercy and its ministries, has been actively working with corporations to improve their policies and identify human trafficking victims within their industries. The mission of Mercy Investment Services is to enhance the financial resources of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas through socially responsible investing. Mercy Investment Services engages in collaborative efforts to raise the Community's corporate voice to effect systemic change in corporate policies and activities; provide capital to community organizations; and participate in other investment opportunities consistent with the Mercy mission.

As a consumer, you can help Mercy Investment Services have a greater impact on company policy. By notifying the hotels at which you stay of your

concern for human trafficking, you can take an active role in ending this tragedy. Mercy Investment Services offers a standard letter that identifies your relationship with Mercy and your request for the hotel to address this issue in its practices and policies.

Please visit www.mercyinvestmentservices.org to print your letter. You'll be asked to fill out a short form identifying the hotel at which you're staying. This information will help our social responsibility staff follow up with the hotel regarding their practices. Thank you for helping Mercy Investment Services to raise corporate awareness and implement the changes needed to end human trafficking.

By Amanda LePoire, project manager for Mercy Investment Services in their St. Louis, Missouri offices.



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*Extending the invitation...
Expanding the Circle*

World Day of Prayer for Vocations

(Sunday, May 15th)

When was the last time you shared your journey in Mercy with a colleague? Perhaps he/she is waiting to be invited to join the circle of Mercy as a vowed member, a Mercy Associate, a Companion in Mercy or a Mercy Volunteer Corps member.

Prayer for Vocations

Gentle God, You call us by name and lead us to life.
Through baptism you commission us to
proclaim the Good News.

Bless and strengthen all men and women, lay
and ordained, who serve in the Church.

Guide and give wisdom to those discerning their
vocation. Enrich our Church with dedicated married
and single people, with priests, religious and deacons.

Filled with joy and your Holy Spirit may we follow
Jesus, our Good Shepherd, now and always. Amen

RECEPTIONS & PROFESSIONS

Congratulations to **Marites Cabrera, RSM**, who made her final profession on April 30th in Cebu, Philippines.

Maureen King, RSM, professed final vows on Saturday, May 14th at 4 p.m. in Watchung, New Jersey.

Mary Oladimeji, RSM, and **Charmaine Jayawardene, RSM**, have been approved for perpetual profession. Their ceremony will be in Auburn, California on Saturday, June 4th.

Nidia Huanacuni Quispe, RSM, is professing final vows in Lima, Peru on June 12th.

Audrey Abbata, will be received as a novice on July 13th in Belmont, North Carolina.

Please keep these sisters and their Communities in your prayers.

The addresses for these sisters can be accessed through MercySource should you wish to send them notes in the Mercy tradition.

“The tender Mercy of God has given us one another.”

Catherine McAuley