



# The Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy of Newfoundland

## Mercy Associates

Image of Catherine McAuley from Book Two – “Be as Shining  
Lamps” by Caroline Thompson



### **Formation**

### **Resource**

**for those aspiring to become  
Mercy Associates**

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Mercy, the principal path marked out by  
Jesus Christ to those who are desirous of  
following Him, has in all ages of the  
Church excited the faithful in a particular  
manner to instruct and comfort the sick  
and dying poor, as in them they regarded  
the person of our divine Master ...

*Original Rule, Sisters of Mercy*

## **Acknowledgement**

The work on which this Chapter and the following Chapters are based was previously developed by the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea over a period of years. We thank Carmel Ross, Executive Officer, Mercy Associates, Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea and those involved in developing the Formation Resource. Ms. Ross is gratefully acknowledged for permission to use the materials found in the Formation Resource and which is provided on their website. The Institute has not put a ‘creative commons’ copyright on the material and probably will not do so. They see it as a benefit to Mercy Associates around the world to share the resources they have.

# Chapter 1: Welcome and Introduction

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### Notes for users:

On September 24, 2023, the Associate Advisory Committee launched its *Mercy Associate Formation Resource* with approval by the Sisters of Mercy of Newfoundland Leadership Team. This 21-page manual incorporates the following: a welcome and introduction, the charism of Catherine McAuley, use of the resource, vision statement and practice, criteria for being a Mercy Associate, formation and basic terms. The Formation Resource is modeled in part on the manual for Associates of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea. It is designed for use by candidates aspiring to become Mercy Associates. The formation process entails proceeding steadily through the resource, guided by a mentor or other Mercy Associates, with time for reflection, discussion and prayer to discern if Mercy Associates is a suitable pathway for candidates. This preparation of this document involved loving, time-consuming and commitment by the Associate Advisory Committee.

The Associate Legacy Project

## 1.0 Welcome and Introduction

This resource is being given to you because you have expressed an interest in becoming a Mercy Associate. Its purpose is to provide material that will help you learn more about the Mercy Associates movement – its background, the Sisters of Mercy, their foundress Catherine McAuley, what Mercy Associates do, and so on.

The charism of Catherine McAuley plays an integral part in the Mercy Associates movement and the history of the Sisters of Mercy. Section 1.1 will set out Catherine’s life and how her charism has shaped the Sisters of Mercy, not only here in Newfoundland and Labrador, but around the world.

Mercy Associates are lay women and men who experience a call to the charism of mercy, and seek to live this call in their daily lives. Mercy is a quality and gift of God, bestowed generously on us, often with a life-changing impact. Mercy Associates, having experienced mercy, feel compelled to extend mercy to others, knowing the need and benefit of it for all humankind.

Mercy Associates groups are found in a variety of places including parishes and workplaces. They:

- cherish the virtue and practice of mercy in their lives, and seek a faith community to nurture their commitment to mercy;
- meet for prayer, formation, reflection, and to engage in service initiatives based on mercy and justice within and beyond their local community;
- ‘associate’ with each other and with the Sisters of Mercy, complementing and extending the work of the Sisters in Newfoundland.

Many congregations of Sisters of Mercy around the world have established Mercy Associates groups. The Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy of Newfoundland is one of these, and this Formation Resource is for their aspiring Mercy Associates.



Photo Credit: Justin Drover

Bowring Park

## 1.1 The Charism of Catherine McAuley

- ❖ Catherine's time: Ireland in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries
- ❖ Factors which influenced Catherine
- ❖ Founding the House of Mercy – Baggot St., Dublin
- ❖ The Founding of a new Religious Congregation – the Sisters of Mercy
- ❖ Catherine's Rule for the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy
- ❖ New Foundations of Sisters of Mercy and Death of the Foundress
- ❖ Sisters of Mercy around the World

## Catherine McAuley

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*Catherine McAuley was an Irish woman born in 1778, who died in 1841 – yet her life and spirit continue to speak to us today.*

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### Catherine's time: Ireland in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries

Ireland in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was suffering from the problems caused by the Penal Laws after 1691 and other restrictive Acts designed to suppress Irish Catholics by stamping out Catholicism and encouraging the Irish to become Protestants. Catholics were barred from purchasing and inheriting property, entering certain professions, holding public or military office; there also were restrictions on clergy and prohibition of education other than in a Protestant school. Catholic Schools were declared illegal. Catholics were very poor and lacked any power to make things better.

Some respite for Catholics came with the First Relief Act 1783, which repealed the 1709 Penal Law. Catholic Emancipation continued over the next four decades, culminating in Catholics receiving the right to vote in 1828. Yet Ireland in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was still suffering from the problems caused by these Penal Laws.

In 1775 Nano Nagle established the Presentation Sisters but like other religious congregations up to that time, they were semi-cloistered, so the poor had to come to them. However Catholic development was being delayed by the shortage of priests and teachers and the lack of spiritual and material resources. Schools for the poor were high on Archbishop Troy's wish list. The hierarchy of the Church was well re-established by the 1830's and sought to win back the Irish poor to the Church.

Dublin of the early 1800's was a city of two very different experiences, depending on your place in society. It was a city of wealth and sophistication, with universities, libraries and hospitals, music, art, poetry and culture, inhabited by the wealthy and mainly protestant middle and upper class who were the minority. It was at the same time a city of poverty and oppression, illness and disease, of wretched living conditions, inhabited by a large number of poor who were mainly Catholic.



*One room tenement dwelling, Dublin, Francis St, Dublin. Photo from National Archives, Ireland.*

With this background over such a lengthy period of time, we can see the divide between rich and poor was not only about material wealth and access to education, hospitals and employment opportunities, but was by this time ingrained in the fabric of how the society understood itself.

### **Factors which influenced Catherine**

When one looks at images of Catherine McAuley, one notices that she is not always portrayed wearing a habit. This reflects the fact that Catherine was a vowed religious woman for only 10 of her 63 years of life.



We can reflect upon what may have driven this woman to devote her life to practical works of mercy, firstly as a lay woman and later in life as a vowed religious. What and who influenced her to act as she did? Though each of us has myriad influences that shape us, three particular points of influence for Catherine were:

- **her family, especially her father James**

- **the Callaghans, a Quaker couple who Catherine worked for over a twenty-year period and**
- **the scriptures, the Holy Bible.**

Though Catholic at a time when Catholics were derided, Catherine’s family was amongst the small number who were successful, well off and accepted in polite society thanks to the great skill of her father, a renowned and much sought-after builder in the midst of the Georgian building boom.

Catherine’s father, James, was a committed Catholic and as a young child Catherine came face to face with the poor as she saw her father ministering to the poor in their home. Tragically, he died when Catherine was still a young child. Her widowed mother, a woman with many social skills but lacking financial acumen, died when Catherine was in her late teens. Her mother’s death led to the breakup of the family, Catherine going to live with her uncle. Within one year, however, poverty forced her, together with her brother and sister, to live with a Protestant family.

In 1803, aged 25 years, Catherine became acquainted with **the Callaghans**. She became a companion to Catherine Callaghan, a Quaker woman, and lived with her and her husband William at Coolock House (*pictured overleaf*) set on ten hectares (20 acres) on the outskirts of Dublin. Quakers were known for their study of scripture and Catherine read the scriptures each day to Catherine Callaghan. The Quakers also had a strong commitment to social justice and women would often undertake visitations outside their homes in pairs.





The Callaghans supported Catherine’s work in the parish to help the poor, although they remained suspicious of Popery (Catholicism) and forbade religious images in their house.

In 1822 following the death of the couple, Catherine, now aged 44, found herself heiress to almost all they possessed. She inherited between 20,000 and 30,000 pounds, some of it being in the form of annual income payments and some a lump sum (equivalent to about \$10m in today’s currency). Catherine continued her charitable work bringing orphans into her house and distributing food and clothing daily among the needy of the village.

**Scripture** taught Catherine to respect the unique dignity of each person. The Genesis text is foundational in establishing the respect and dignity due to every person regardless of their place in life.

*So God created humankind in God’s own likeness, in the image of God, God created them.... God saw everything that God had made, and indeed it was very good. Gen 1:26-31*

This key conviction guided Catherine’s life – the inherent goodness of every person made in the likeness of God – in practice this means every person must be treated with equal respect and dignity.

The passage below in Matthew’s Gospel led Catherine to undertake works of mercy; to welcome the stranger, feed the poor, visit the sick and so on:

*Come, and possess the kingdom which has been prepared for you since the creation of the world. I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me a drink; I was a stranger and you received me in your homes, naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me, in prison and you visited me.... Just as you did it to one of these the least of my brothers and sisters you did it to me. Matthew 25:34- 36 & 40.*



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So God created humankind in God’s own likeness, in the image of God, God created them.... God saw everything that God had made, and indeed it was very good.

Gen. 1:26-31

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## Founding of the House of Mercy – Baggot Street, Dublin

Catherine understood the great social, economic and political oppression under which the poor struggled, and she had bitter experiences trying to find shelter for abused servant women and homeless girls who were turned away by many institutions.

She consulted priest friends about how best to meet the needs of the destitute. She also consulted the Irish Sisters of Charity, although she had reservations about the restrictions she thought religious life would impose on the works of mercy to which she felt called. Until her time, women religious were required to remain in their convents, and whatever works they undertook were undertaken from that site.

The general wellbeing and education of girls was a particular problem and with no education and few skills, many young women were forced to live on the streets.

Catherine built a large house on Baggot Street (pictured) in which she could educate poor girls and offer shelter to homeless young women. When planning the house, Catherine instructed the architect to create two large dormitories for homeless women and servant girls, two large rooms to serve as classrooms for poor girls, some very small bedrooms for the residents who would assist her and a chapel.



On September 24, 1827, the feast of Our Lady of Mercy, Catherine's cousin Catherine Byrn and Anna Maria Doyle, moved into the partially finished house. This house was to be called 'The House of Mercy'.

Catherine chose a location in the midst of the prosperous area of Dublin because she wanted the rich to see the poor. Prosperous people, especially the married women and their daughters, usually did not come into contact with poor people because the poor lived in slums, a distance from the homes of the wealthy. Catherine's hope was that if the rich did see the poor, they would become aware of their needs.

Catherine thought that the married women could help as volunteers for a few hours each week and the single women could help for many more hours until they married. In turn, she anticipated that those young women who trained for domestic or other work at the House of Mercy would obtain work more easily because of her location.

While at the House of Mercy women were given skills to assist them in earning income or gaining employment to break the cycle of dependence, as well as accommodation for them and

their children. Employment options for poor women were limited and domestic service was one of the options available. Catherine set up a commercial laundry in the basement of the house and also provided training in domestic chores.

*This section adapted from “Foundress”, <http://www.mercyworld.org/foundress/story>*

## **The Founding of a new Religious Congregation – the Sisters of Mercy**

The Founding of a new Religious Congregation – the Sisters of Mercy Catherine’s work was not always well received. She faced opposition both within and without the Church. After all, the Sisters of Charity were already working with the poor and Catherine could join them. It was in response to some of this opposition and her increasing awareness that if her work was to continue after her death it would have to be through a religious congregation, that she decided to establish her little group as a regular religious community. This was despite her initial reluctance and fears that becoming a religious congregation, with its attendant structures, would impinge on her practical works of charity.

In 1830, she, Anna Maria Doyle and Elizabeth Harley entered the Presentation Convent at George’s Hill in Dublin to train as Religious Sisters. They professed their vows and became the first Sisters of Mercy. The Sisters of Mercy were founded on 12 December 1831 when Catherine was 53 years old.

Catherine’s Sisters were not going to be locked away in convents. They focused their attention on local needs and were soon known as the ‘walking nuns’ as they walked the streets to help others as distinct from the Presentation Sisters who by this time were enclosed in their convents. They were especially concerned with the education of girls, visitation of the sick in their homes and the protection of distressed women of good character. This service focus was so central to the Sisters of Mercy that whereas most religious profess vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, Sisters of Mercy take a fourth vow of apostolic service.

The corporal and spiritual works of mercy which draw religious from a life of contemplation, so far from separating them from the love of God, unite them much more closely to Him and render them more valuable in His holy service.

The Spirit of the Institute

## **Catherine's Rule for the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy**

In order to gain Church approval Catherine had to write a Rule (like a constitution) for her new institute. The first paragraph of the Rule sets out clearly the objects of the work of Catherine and her Sisters. The latter section spells out the particular characteristics of the Rule of the Sisters of Mercy.

*The Sisters admitted into this Religious Congregation besides their principal and general end of all Religious orders, such as attending particularly to their own perfection, must also have in view what is peculiarly characteristic of this Institute of the Sisters of Mercy, that is a most serious application to the instruction of poor girls, visitation of the sick, and protection of distressed women of good character.*

Catherine devoted chapters of the Rule to these three areas. The chapter on the Schools shows clearly the importance to be given to religious instruction. Catherine placed great emphasis upon the education of women, because she believed that:

*The Sisters shall feel convinced that no work of charity can be more productive of good to society, or more conducive to the happiness of the poor than the careful instruction of women, since whatever be the station they are destined to fill, their example and advice will always possess influence, and wherever a religious woman presides, peace and good order are generally to be found.*

The Visitation of the Sick concerned the instruction and comfort of the sick and dying poor in their homes. Catherine called for great tenderness to be shown and for the Sisters *to ease and comfort the patient, since we are ever most disposed to receive advice and instruction, from those who evince compassion for us.* The cholera epidemic of 1832 left so many people ill and dying that the Sisters also embarked in earnest on health care as a ministry.

The Rule also reinforced Catherine's commitment to the spiritual and material needs of the poor. Distressed women of good character were to be provided with religious instruction and with practical instruction (what we would now call vocational skills) to enable them to gain suitable employment as this would enable them to support themselves in the future.

## **New Foundations of Sisters of Mercy and the Death of the Foundress**

Over the next ten years Convents of Mercy were established throughout Ireland (nine additional foundations and two branch houses in Dublin) and England (two additional foundations), with Catherine personally founding all but two of these herself in response to requests from local Bishops for help.

The last of these was in Birmingham in England, and during her time at this new foundation Catherine's health began to fail. She had achieved an extraordinary amount both at Baggot Street and by being a part of the foundation of eleven other convents, and eventually this workload took its toll. She returned in very poor health to Baggot St in mid-1841 and was cared for there by Ursula Frayne and other Sisters until her death on November 11th 1841, aged 63 years. Catherine was buried at the Baggot St. site (pictured).



As Joanna Regan RSM has noted about the legacy of her life: *She died ... having set in motion what was to become the largest congregation in the world ever established by an English-speaking founder. (Tender Courage, 1978, p. 24).* After Catherine's death these foundations in Ireland and England established further foundations locally and around the world

*Will you tell the Sisters to get a good cup of tea ... when I am gone and to comfort one another.*

*Letter of Mary Vincent Whitty RSM to Cecilia Mannion RSM, quoting Catherine McAuley, as she neared her death.*



## **Sisters of Mercy around the World**

The spread of Mercy congregations around the world was extensive, each following Catherine's pattern on founding an independent congregation supported by another in its early days until it became established and had its own approved constitutions. In 1992 these congregations formed an association, Mercy International Association (MIA), located at Catherine's House in Dublin. This centre draws together the efforts and resources of Mercy congregations around the world, and provides opportunities for voluntary service as it strives to retain the heritage of Catherine's original foundation and continues to share her charism with visitors and via a newsletter, with women and men of Mercy around the world. MIA also coordinates Mercy initiatives in areas of need including human trafficking, cosmology and eco-justice, and other justice-related issues. It provides pilgrimage and leadership programmes for those with a commitment to mercy: including secondary students, senior staff and boards of Mercy ministries, visitors in general and Sisters of Mercy.

Today the Sisters of Mercy are in over 30 countries, serving in a multitude of ministries with an ever growing group of Associates, volunteers and partners-in-Ministry, all continuing in the spirit of Catherine McAuley.

Please visit <https://www.mercyworld.org/about/mercy-family/> to view a map that shows the countries where Sisters of Mercy currently work.

## **1.2 Use of this Formation Resource**

The purpose of this resource is to provide formation (preparation) for lay women and men who are experiencing a call to mercy. Over a period of time, you will read, reflect on, discuss and respond to the topics covered in this resource. To assist with this, one or two mentors who are already Mercy Associates or a Network Facilitator, will meet with you as you consider whether becoming a Mercy Associate is the best response to your call to mercy. While you are undertaking this formation programme, you may find it helpful to keep a journal (written or digital), as a tool to aid reflection on the topics covered.

In addition to this resource, the Mercy Associates Administrative Handbook is available on the same webpage as this resource. It contains practical information about how Mercy Associates groups conduct themselves – their meetings, ministries, and other matters. The handbook will give you a better understanding of the Mercy Associates movement and whether it might meet your needs for a lay Mercy community of prayer and service to others.

## **1.3 Vision Statement and Vision in Practice**

The two core documents that explain the most important things about being a Mercy Associate are the Vision Statement and the Vision in Practice. Both are presented below, and you will find that some of the following sections will help you to understand these.

### **VISION STATEMENT**

Mercy Associates are called to live and share the compassion of God revealed in the life of Jesus Christ, in Scripture and through the vision and charism of Catherine McAuley.

Guided by mercy values of compassion, justice, hospitality and hope, they:

- celebrate and give thanks for God’s merciful love
- nurture their relationship with God to enable them to witness to their faith in prayer and action

- give expression to God’s mercy: in response to the needs of these times in the ordinariness of their daily lives and in all their relationships
- journey with each other and the Sisters of Mercy.

This Vision Statement is complemented by the Vision in Practice, which elaborates on what Mercy Associates do – how they live the Mercy charism in their lives, nurture their faith, and bring mercy and justice to the world.

Please visit the Sisters of Mercy of Newfoundland website to view the Mission and Vision of the Sisters of Mercy of Newfoundland at <https://www.sistersofmercynf.org/mercy-in-action/mission-and-vision/>.

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**Have you had contact with Sisters of Mercy? What do you admire about how they live and the place of their Christian faith in their lives?**

**The expression ‘the ordinariness of their daily lives’ is used – how is it possible to share God’s compassion with others in our lives every day?**

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## The VISION in PRACTICE

Mercy Associates are women and men seeking a faith community in which to nurture and live out the charism of Mercy. They deepen their engagement with Mercy by:

### **Participating in formation at Congregational and local level:**

- Engage in formation opportunities that form a Mercy culture for the sake of God's mission, through:
  - ◆ Engaging with the story of God's mercy, Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy
  - ◆ Developing a reflective, mindful perspective on Mercy and Eco-Justice issues
  - ◆ Experiencing Mercy in action
  - ◆ Growing a just and compassionate community
- Participate in gatherings and pilgrimages to Mercy places of heritage

### **Ensuring a balance between contemplation and action in the Mercy tradition:**

- Nurture a spirit of prayer individually and at all gatherings
- Celebrate significant Mercy dates and occasions locally and across the Congregation
- Offer prayerful support for the flourishing of the Mercy charism
- Identify social needs and issues, including calls for Mercy ministry support
- Nurture a practice of discernment drawing on scripture, tradition, Catholic Social Teaching and life experiences
- Respond by prayer and action to the needs of our time
- Support the public voice of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy of Newfoundland on eco-justice issues.



**How would you describe “the charism of Mercy”? Think about how mercy was expressed by God in scripture accounts, in the life of Jesus, and in the lives and works of the Sisters of Mercy.**

**In your life at a personal level, when have you been conscious of receiving mercy from another person that has had a profound impact on you?**

## **1.4 Criteria for being a Mercy Associate**

The Mercy Associates movement is open to women and men seeking a faith community in which to nurture and live out the charism of Mercy.

To become a Mercy Associate, women and men need to:

- Be baptised in a Christian denomination or have fidelity to their own spiritual affiliation
- Participate in the preparation (formation) and discernment process
- Join a Mercy Associates group
- Make a commitment to be a Mercy Associate and renew at the discretion of the Leadership Team.

Once an aspiring Mercy Associate has made their commitment, they will become part of a Mercy Associates group in a specific location. This connection with a specific group is a key means by which a community of Mercy Associates is formed. Being a Mercy Associate is not a solitary pursuit, but rather entails joining with others who share a commitment to mercy and drawing support from that community.

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**Sometimes significant occasions, such as birth or death, can make a deep impact on how we see the meaning of life. Can you think of times in your own life where you’ve become more conscious of the meaning of life?**

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## 1.5 Formation – what does this mean?

The word *formation* is often used in settings where religious faith is present and it is used in this resource. It refers to a process that a person willingly undergoes when they want to learn more about that faith tradition and develop their personal spirituality within it. Spirituality concerns how each of us understands the meaning of life. For many people, it will involve belief in a divine being or God. Our personal perspective on this, our own spirituality, will shape how we live and what is important to us in life.

For those whose spirituality involves a Christian commitment, including Mercy Associates, formation is a lifelong process of being open to God's grace, gradually bringing us closer to God, being shaped to be more like Christ in thought, word and action. Formation will entail reflecting on the life of Jesus and on the God of Mercy as these are found in our scriptures.

The Mercy Associates perspective on Mercy is inspired by the life, faith and works of Catherine McAuley, a woman of the nineteenth century who founded the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland. She was a devout Catholic and a woman of prayer and social action. As well as learning about Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy, formation also focusses on a person's individual relationship with God, including prayer, reflection and contemplation, with a view to strengthening one's faith and relationship with God.

This resource is designed to support the formation of lay women and men in the charism of Mercy, as it is understood and expressed in Christianity. Aspiring Mercy Associates will be invited to think deeply and reflect in prayer about the material covered in this resource and see how it enriches their lives and informs their decisions and actions.

## Appendix A – BASIC TERMS

|                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Advocacy                             | Activity by an individual or group which aims to influence decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions. It includes activities that a person or organization undertakes including letter-writing and speaking at meetings. *                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Chapter                              | The highest governing authority of the Congregation is the Chapter, held every four years. It has legislative, executive and policy making power. In the period between Chapters, authority is vested in the Congregational Leader. Three Congregational members assist the Congregational Leader in exercising the role of leadership and together they make up the Congregational Leadership Team (CLT). These four members of the CLT are elected by delegates at each Chapter. |
| Charism                              | A gift given to Christians by the Holy Spirit for the good of the Church. Founders of religious institutes are said to have received a particular charism that urges and inspires them to commit their lives to living the gospel with a special emphasis on the insights that are the gift of their charism.                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Community                            | A multi-faceted word, for Sisters of Mercy of Newfoundland, community refers to Sisters living together within the Province of Newfoundland and in the Mission in Peru sharing the charism of mercy. At a more general level, community refers to a group of people who belong together because of a shared characteristic; for Mercy Associates, community refers to their local group.                                                                                           |
| Commitment Statement                 | After an aspiring Mercy Associate has completed the formation process and been accepted as a suitable candidate, they are invited to attend a ceremony at which they publicly pronounce their commitment to be a Mercy Associate, and to undertake particular ministries.                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Discernment                          | The process of determining God's desire in a current situation or for one's life. * Discernment usually involves a period of prayer and reflection as one seeks to hear God's desire. Though this is an individual undertaking, the counsel of others is often sought as options are considered.                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Formation                            | A process a person willingly undergoes when they want to learn more about a faith tradition and develop their personal spirituality within it. It is usually some months or even years in duration, and the learnings gained will allow the person to make decisions about their calling in life. Candidates to become a Sister of Mercy undergo a period of formation, as do Mercy Associates.                                                                                    |
| Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy | The Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy of Newfoundland is a community of Catholic Religious Sisters in Newfoundland founded in 1842 and includes the establishment of a Mission in 1961 in Peru.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

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|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mercy International Association (MIA) | Mercy International Association is an organization of the leaders of Mercy Congregations, Institutes and Federations throughout the world, founded to serve the Sisters of Mercy, their associates and colleagues in ministry. Members of the Association share the passion of their foundress, Catherine McAuley, to bring mercy to people who are poor, sick and uneducated. ~                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Mercy                                 | The disposition to be kind and forgiving. Founded on compassion, mercy differs from compassion or the feeling of sympathy, by putting this feeling into practice with a readiness to assist. It is therefore the ready willingness to help anyone in need, especially in need of pardon or reconciliation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Mercy Associate                       | Lay women and men who have undertaken a formation process and been accepted to make a public commitment (see Commitment Statement above). They cherish the virtue and practice of mercy in their lives, and seek a faith community to nurture their commitment to mercy; meet for prayer, formation, reflection, and to engage in service initiatives based on mercy and justice within and beyond their local community; and ‘associate’ with each other and with the Sisters of Mercy, complementing and extending the work of the Sisters in Newfoundland. |
| Ministry                              | Ministry is the expression of mission through activity we undertake to advance the reign of God. It is based on the life of Jesus, whose ministry was to teach and heal. Christians are called, through their baptism, to undertake ministry according to their gifts, in response to needs local and distant. The corporal and spiritual works of mercy are examples of ministry, indicating that prayer and one’s inner disposition are aspects of ministry as are our active ways to serving the world.                                                    |
| Mission                               | In Christianity, mission refers to all baptized persons being ‘sent’ to continue the work of Jesus Christ in advancing the reign of God by expressing the love of God in word and action.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Prayer                                | Prayer, at its most simple, is the practice of placing oneself in reverence before God, being open to experiencing the presence of God. Prayer will sometimes comprise formal, written prayers that are said either privately or in a group of other Christians; it might also be practices such as reflection, meditation, silence, sacred reading ( <i>lectio divina</i> ). For a Mercy Associate, prayer for others may be a form of ministry.                                                                                                             |
| Service                               | Service is an expression of ministry, based on identifying the needs of others and responding to those needs in a practical way that alleviates suffering or disadvantage and upholds the dignity of those being served.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Spirituality                                                                                                                                                                                                | One of our gifts as human beings is the ability to consider what meaning of life holds, and in particular, what is the meaning of our own life. For many people, spirituality involves religious faith such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, including others, while for others the meaning of life they perceive in life does not involve a particular religious tradition.                                    |
| Sister of Mercy                                                                                                                                                                                             | A Sister of Mercy is a woman who responds to the call to know God's loving kindness and commits her life to sharing this with others through a life of service. Sisters of Mercy make life-long vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and in this case, become a member of a community of Catholic religious women called the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy of Newfoundland.                              |
| Suscipe                                                                                                                                                                                                     | This a prayer of offering written by Catherine McAuley as an expression of her total commitment to loving and serving God. It is of special importance to Sisters of Mercy around the world and often Mercy Associates also pray and sing this prayer.                                                                                                                                                          |
| Vision                                                                                                                                                                                                      | It takes us beyond our daily lives and guides us to live in such a way that the vision might one day become reality. In Christianity the ultimate vision focuses on the love of God and the reign of God. For Mercy Associates, the Vision Statement describes how Mercy Associates strive to bring mercy and justice into their own lives and to participate fruitfully in their local Mercy Associates group. |
| <p>* Adapted from Wikipedia, <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/">https://en.wikipedia.org/</a><br/> ~ Adapted from the MIA website, <a href="http://www.mercyworld.org/">http://www.mercyworld.org/</a></p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |