February 26, 2015

Note from the Institute Leadership Team
As Lent enters into our days and hearts, we remember the urgent challenge that Pope Francis calls us to confront—“the globalization of indifference.” He asks us “to become islands of mercy in the midst of the sea of indifference”—a world where indifference to suffering, especially that of the poor, has grown to unprecedented proportions.

Pope Francis defines indifference as a fatal withdrawal into ourselves. Perhaps each of us can identify with that indifference borne from a broken heart, a wounded spirit, a resisted forgiveness—to name a few of our blocks.

How blessed we are that the love of God breaks through that fatal withdrawal and clothes us with goodness and mercy. During our Lenten journey may we pray for and with each other that our life in Mercy is truly a witness to the infinite possibilities that God’s love holds out to us so that we become those islands of mercy for our hurting world.

Register today for annual gathering of Alliance of Sisters of Mercy of Color
March 12 is the deadline to register to join the Alliance of Sisters of Mercy of Color Living in the United States for their annual meeting April 9-12 at the Pallottine Renewal Center in Florissant, Missouri. Sister Gayle Lwanga-Crumblly from the Sisters of the Good Shepherd Community in St. Louis, Missouri, will facilitate the meeting centered on, “Our Identity as Women of Color, Rooted in Religious Life.” If you are interested in attending, please email Eva Maria Sawyerr (esawyerr@sistersofmercy.org) or Sister Priscilla Moreno (South Central) (pmoreno@mercysc.org) for more information.

Apply for new session of Collaborative Leadership Development Program (CLDP)
The Collaborative Leadership Development Program (CLDP) will begin a new session in August 2015. The CLDP is an integrative process designed to prepare women religious, associates and co-members 60 years of age or younger with the skills, knowledge and confidence to assume leadership positions in community and ministry. Over an 18-month period, including three four-day gatherings in St. Louis, Missouri, the CLDP blends relational and contemplative practices, while fostering self-growth and spiritual development through various study and interaction methods.
Applications for the new session are due by April 23, 2015. This popular and forward-thinking program filled up quickly in its first two offerings in 2013 and 2014. For more information, applicant criteria and application form visit [www.TheCLDP.org](http://www.TheCLDP.org) or contact program director Kathy Wade (email kwade42@gmail.com, phone 301.587.0423 x 2314) or Sister Rita Waters (email rwaters@sistersofmercy.org, phone 301.587.0423 x 2310).

**New members gather in St. Louis**

On February 13-15 new members based in the United States gathered at Mercy Center in St. Louis, Missouri, to further their learnings about Mercy as they continue on the path to become Sisters of Mercy. The following are reflections on the weekend’s workshops from two of our new members.

At the post-canonical novitiate / temporary professed workshop, Sister Margaret Farley (West Midwest) presented on the vow of obedience. We began our time together by discussing the historical background and transformation of the vow as it responded and adapted to the evolution of religious life through the centuries. Plunging more deeply into the topic, we reflected on the vow as being a gift that binds us in fidelity to God and is witnessed to a faith community. It claims our faithfulness to a promise and helps us to be steadfast in our desires. We also examined obedience in the context of the Church, including ecclesiological models, conscience and obligation, and discernment of individual and common good. We concluded our time together in reflection on obedience as a call to love. This love, exemplified by Jesus and Catherine McAuley, invites us to receptivity, equality, mutuality, and communion in bringing forth the Reign of God in the world. —Submitted by Sister Renée Kettering, temporary professed

If I were to sum up the Incorporation Workshop Weekend in three words, I would call it “A Blessed Exchange.” Knowledge, blessings, fears, hopes, anecdotes, prayers, wisdom, love and laughter were all shared at Mercy Center among the women in and working with formation.

The candidates had the opportunity to meet and greet the Institute Leadership Team (ILT) via a Lifesize video chat. It was a wonderful opportunity to share how we, candidates, as well as the members of the ILT “found Mercy” and to share our thoughts on the future of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. I am especially grateful that the members of the ILT were willing to take a “Lifesize Selfie” with us!

While those in the temporary professed, apostolic novice, and new transfer group had the opportunity to discuss the vow of obedience with Sister Margaret Farley, we candidates shared with Sister Marie Chin (South Central) about community. At the last session with Marie, she
said that we should continue to unpack the message of the weekend for a while, and I know I will be doing that for some time. As we continue the third year of Women of Mercy, Women of Hope and recall our Year 2 discussion of vibrant community life, Sister Marie shared that “vibrancy is an interior attitude,” and I love that.

I’m still unpacking from this weekend (both Marie’s beautiful thoughts and my suitcase), but here’s another quote from Marie that really touched me: “Instead of ‘skills,’ we grow in our capacity for community.”

I’m so grateful for this part of the incorporation process, as it gives the new members not only a chance to get to know one another, but also a chance to grow and learn together how we can add to vibrant communities. —Submitted by Kelly, candidate

Photo: Front row: Sisters Mandy Carrier, novice; Jenny Wilson, temporary professed; Claudia Cano, temporary professed; and Renée Kettering, temporary professed. Second row: Victoria Battell, transfer; Marybeth, candidate; and Patricia, candidate. Third row: Kelly, candidate; Colleen, candidate; and Sister Cathy Manderfield, temporary professed. Fourth row: Sisters Margaret Farley and Marie Chin; Taryn Stark, temporary professed; and Jacqueline Nedd, temporary professed.

Leaders and XJT defend executive order on immigration

On November 20, 2014, after months of pressure from the faith community and immigrant-led organizations, President Obama used his executive authority to limit the deportations of some undocumented immigrants. Since then, the executive order has come under attack in Congress and federal court.

On Monday, February 16, the federal judge presiding over the 26-state lawsuit challenging the president’s use of executive power issued a temporary injunction against both the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) expansion and the Deferred Action for Parent of Americans (DAPA). Sister Patricia McDermott, Institute president, issued the following statement in response to the federal court ruling:

“I am shocked and saddened by Judge Hanen’s decision to issue a preliminary injunction that temporarily blocks the implementation process of the new immigrant deferred action programs. We urge the 5th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals to take up this case immediately. Without this executive action, 150,000 children annually would continue to lose a parent to deportation. Hundreds of legal scholars agree that the President's executive action on immigration is constitutional and within his authority.” Read her full statement here (http://www.sistersofmercy.org/about-us/news-and-events/mercy-leadership-urges-5th-circuit-us-court-of-appeals-to-reject-threats-to-executive-action/?t=news).
Meanwhile, this week the Senate voted for the fourth consecutive time on a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) appropriations bill that would nullify President Obama’s executive orders on immigration, including the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) in 2012.

If a resolution is not reached by Friday, February 27, the stalemate could cause a partial government shutdown. It is important that your elected officials know people of faith want a “clean” DHS funding bill that does not attack immigrants and their families. Join with other Mercy Advocates and send an email to your senators and representative here (http://cqrcengage.com/sistersofmercy/app/write-a-letter?0&engagementId=81273).

**Video now available: “History of Institute and Constitutions”**
For a number of years Sister Helen Amos (South Central) has been sharing with our candidates in the United States her wisdom and personal experience in the Institute’s formation and the creation of our *Constitutions*. Now Helen’s presentation is available to all members in a seven-part video series. All of the video clips can be accessed and downloaded here (https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLyO764CqlrkUgFO6q1OF-maLUiNs8L1vR). Welcoming communities may find the videos particularly helpful as they assist new members in learning about our history and our founding documents.