August 14, 2014

Pray for Peace and Justice in Ferguson, St. Louis

Sisters of Mercy hold in our prayers the family of Michael Brown, the teen who was fatally shot in Ferguson, Missouri, on August 9. We have watched in horror as anger and outrage have fueled more violence in Ferguson, Missouri, following this shooting by a police officer. Grounded in our commitment to nonviolence (http://www.sistersofmercy.org/what-we-do/social-justice-advocacy/non-violence/) and racial justice (http://www.sistersofmercy.org/what-we-do/social-justice-advocacy/anti-racism/), we pray for peace (http://www.sistersofmercy.org/resources/prayer-for-peace/) at all levels. We share this prayer for peace as we trust in the power of prayer in times of doubt, struggle, pain and sadness.

Note from the Institute Leadership Team (ILT)

Greetings from Nashville, Tennessee! We, along with the Community Leadership Teams and over 750 other women religious leaders, are attending the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) Assembly. Our theme, *Holy Mystery Revealed in our Midst*, is inviting us into contemplative dialogue about the promise and challenges facing women religious today. Sister Nancy Schreck, OSF, offered the keynote and Sister Elizabeth A. Johnson, CSJ, will receive LCWR’s outstanding leadership award.

In addition, we’ll enjoy a lunch with all Sisters of Mercy attending the assembly. We will hop across town to visit 24 of our sisters at Mercy Convent. Finally, on our last day we’ll discuss the needs of children and families fleeing violence and seeking refuge in the United States. We are counting on your prayers during this important LCWR meeting.

Join in prayer for Mercy International

Catherine McAuley was known to pray Thirty Days Prayers before important events. Monday, August 25, 2014, marks 30 days before the 20th anniversary celebration of Mercy International Association (MIA) on September 23. Following in Catherine’s tradition, Mercy International is inviting all members of our worldwide Mercy community to prepare by praying the newly composed “Prayer for MIA” for the 30 days prior to the celebration.
As we pray this prayer, wherever we are, let us be united in our concern for one another and for a world “in need of God’s compassion and mercy” (MIA Vision Statement).

The “Prayer for MIA” is available online here (http://www.mercyworld.org/about_mia/index.cfm?loadref=260).

A print-ready PDF of the prayer can be downloaded here (http://enews.mercyworld.org/enews/100-1bf833a1/editions/131-5c70c1da/user-assets/files/MIA%20Prayer_PRINT01.pdf).

Reminder: Save the Dates for Women of Mercy, Women of Hope Mega Calls
As announced in the July 31, 2014, issue of Mercy Now, the Institute Leadership Conference (ILC) will host five mega calls to share a summary of our contemplative dialogues on vibrant community life, the theme of Year 2 of our Women of Mercy, Women of Hope member engagement process.

You are welcome to join any of the following mega calls:

- September 11, 2014 at 8-9:30 a.m. (EDT)
- September 15, 2014 at 11 a.m. -12:30 p.m. (EDT)
- September 22, 2014 at 8-9:30 a.m. (EDT)
- October 2, 2014 at 7-8:30 p.m. (EDT)
- October 3, 2014 at 2-3:30 p.m. (EDT)

Please note the calls are listed in Eastern Daylight (New York) time. Call-in numbers and directions for these calls will be shared in the August 28, 2014, issue of Mercy Now. In that issue you will also receive a “Fruits of our Contemplative Dialogue” summary document which includes reflection questions on both the summary as well as your experience of the contemplative dialogue process.

Novices entering U.S. Novitiate

Five new novices recently proclaimed their desire to continue their discernment of religious life with the Sisters of Mercy, and will be joining second-year novice Sister Amanda ‘Mandy’ Carrier (Northeast) next week at the U.S. Novitiate in St. Louis, Missouri.

Pictured here are Sisters Phuong Mai Dong (South Central), Marjorie Tapia (Mid-Atlantic), Danielle Gagnon (Mid-Atlantic), Luz Eugenia Alvarez (West Midwest) and Jennifer Barrow (Mid-Atlantic).
Please join in praying for these women and celebrating their continuing journey.

**U.S. Novitiate expands to accommodate more novices entering**

With the five new novices arriving at the U.S. novitiate next week along with one novice who is entering her second year, the U.S. Novitiate at Mercy Center in St. Louis, Missouri, recently underwent renovations to accommodate the growing numbers. Four additional bedrooms, two bathrooms (one of which is accessible for people with disabilities), a classroom including office space, and a prayer room are now ready for use and occupancy by the sisters in the novitiate community.

Photos: *(Top)* The new prayer room is where members of the novitiate community will gather for communal and individual prayer. *(Middle)* One of the new bedrooms in the U.S. Novitiate. *(Bottom)* Looking down the hallway into the newly expanded U.S. Novitiate at Mercy Center in St. Louis, Missouri.

**Immigration reform update: Major accomplishments and next steps for helping migrant children**

Even though the United States government did not pass immigration reform this year, comprehensive immigration reform is inevitable. The political, economic and moral reasons for fixing the broken immigration system have not changed. It’s just a question of when all parties will work together to address the complex issues involved.

In the past 20 months, the Mercy family has made great strides in calling attention to the need for just and humane immigration reform in the United States, from writing letters to hosting prayer services to being arrested for civil disobedience. View a summary of Mercy’s major accomplishments here ([http://www.sistersofmercy.org/files/documents/resources/Justice/8.7.14-Immigration-Accomplishments.pdf](http://www.sistersofmercy.org/files/documents/resources/Justice/8.7.14-Immigration-Accomplishments.pdf)).
View a slideshow of photos from the July 31 act of civil disobedience in front of the White House in which Sister Eileen Campbell, Institute Leadership Team, and Jean Stokan, Institute Justice Team, were arrested, here (https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10152484923632517.1073741840.366919637516&type=3).

While we need to celebrate our accomplishments, a lot of work is still needed. The humanitarian crisis on the border continues, although the number of women and children fleeing into the United States has dropped by half in the months of July and August. The reactionary approach taken by Congress and the Obama administration is causing undue burden and harm to this vulnerable community.

The Institute Justice Team has prepared this easy-to-use toolkit to provide all of the information and resources needed to educate yourself and others and to take action. This toolkit includes an overview of the issue, the current situation with this issue in Congress, talking points, suggestions and resources on getting involved, and a communications guide. The toolkit is available here (http://www.sistersofmercy.org/files/documents/resources/Justice/8.7.14-Mercy-Toolkit---Migration.pdf).

Mercy students empower their global sisters through education

Each June, Mercy-sponsored high schools from across the United States send between four and six student leaders to participate in the Mercy Leadership Conference (MLC). Sister Maureen Christi Donahue (Mid-Atlantic) of Gwynedd Mercy Academy and Eileen Killeen of Marian Mercy Academy are the coordinators of the four-day workshop held at Gwynedd Mercy University in Pennsylvania. Sister Deirdre Mullan, RSM, of Ireland, inspires the service aspect of the program. The young Mercy leaders make a commitment to do something tangible to improve the lives of girls in the developing world. Following the workshop, the students take their ideas to their high schools and organize fundraisers and events to bring the project to life.

Just 10 weeks before this year’s workshop, the world learned about the horror of Boko Haram militants in Nigeria abducting 286 schoolgirls, of a similar age to our participants, for the crime of wanting an education. Then, four days before the students arrived for the conference, a father in Tunisia burned his 13-year-old daughter to death for the crime of walking home from school with a boy in her class. Given these atrocities, the participants chose to focus their efforts on the education of young girls living in extreme poverty. They plan to collect funds throughout this school year to feed the impoverished students attending a school in Nuba, Sudan, which was built by a previous MLC group. Read more about their effort here (http://bit.ly/1r74Uvy).

Community investing impacts women, children around the world
The Dominican Republic, an island nation in the Caribbean Sea, is thousands of miles from the offices of Mercy Investment Services and its community investing program, Mercy Partnership
Fund. But through Mercy Partnership Fund, the Sisters of Mercy’s investments are making a difference around the world.

Community investing—financially supporting projects that benefit the economically poor—has always been an important part of the Sisters of Mercy’s investment philosophy. Since 1995, Mercy Partnership Fund has made low-interest rate loans to national and international organizations such as microfinance institutions, housing developers, community loan funds and credit unions who help those unserved or poorly served by traditional financial sources.

One such organization is ECLOF, a global, ecumenical microfinance organization helping women in Asia, Africa and Latin America support their families and improve their living conditions. A loan from Mercy Partnership Fund helps women such as Milagro de la Cruz improve her small business and support her family. Read Milagro’s story here (http://www.mercyinvestmentservices.org/community-investing-news/891-loan-supports-women-and-families-around-the-globe).