

MERCY GLOBAL ACTION NEWSLETTER

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GREETINGS FROM THE MERCY GLOBAL ACTION OFFICE!

Dear friends,

Welcome to the March issue of our newsletter! We hope you are having a reflective and fruitful Lenten season, and that your Easter period is filled with many blessings.

We write to you from a very lively office, with the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) underway and with the nine fellows of Cohort 3 of the Mercy Global Action Emerging Leaders Fellowship (MELF) here for their New York immersion! In the morning, the office buzzes with the Fellows' excitement about heading across to the United Nations, and in the afternoon, with their reflections of events attended and women's testimonies heard.

A theme that has emerged from their reflections is a feeling of overwhelm; overwhelm at the enormity of women's issues and at the slow pace of progress. Here, we leave you with an excerpt from the Talmud we have returned to for hope:

“Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief.

Do justly now.

Love mercy now.

Walk humbly now.

*You are not obligated to complete the work,
but neither are you free to abandon it.”*

Despite the many challenges faced by women and girls, there remains much to celebrate. In honour of International Women's Day, we were thrilled to announce the ten remarkable women who will form Cohort 4 of MELF from 2024-2025! You can read all about them and their hopes for the program on Page 2...

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• *Announcement of MELF Cohort 4 Fellows!*

To mark International Women's Day, Mercy International Association is thrilled to announce the ten women who will form the fourth cohort of the Mercy Global Action Emerging Leaders Fellowship (MELF) from 2024-2025. The MELF Program, grounded in the three pillars of Justice, Leadership and Mercy, uplifts women to become transformative feminist leaders who empower others, enable creativity, and facilitate mobilization around the collective goals of Mercy.



CHARLOTTE CUMMINGS *New Zealand*

Charlotte Cummings hails from Aotearoa, New Zealand. She has had a varied professional background working across mental health, abuse, and harm investigations, and in consultancy roles for philanthropic trusts.

Charlotte has a strong drive to contribute to making the world a more just and merciful place to be, especially mindful of the experiences for future generations. She is interested in how we hold together the value of tangata (people) and whenua (land).

MAI NGUYEN DOAN RSM *Australia*

Mai Nguyen rsm was born in Vietnam and now lives in Melbourne, Australia. She is a member of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea. She is currently working as a Social Worker at Mercy Health, a ministry of the Sisters of Mercy.

Mai is grateful for this opportunity to undertake the MELF. She hopes to enhance her understanding of human rights and advocacy skills to advance Mercy and Justice, to learn more about positive leadership, and to share with and be inspired by the women she will meet; and to work collaboratively with other women locally and internationally to empower other women to pursue their dreams.



LUCIAH NJOGU *Kenya*

Luciah lives in Nairobi, Kenya. She is currently working as an Education Coordinator at Mukuru Promotion Centre. She is a teacher by profession and has taught for over 15 years. Nurturing young minds and seeing them develop into responsible adults is her greatest achievement, as she believes that education is the greatest engine of personal development.

Her interest in Mercy and Justice comes from her work, of advocating for quality education to the vulnerable child in Mukuru slums, when denied a chance to be in school. It gives her joy in seeing all children attending school as required by law.





MCKENNA SMITH *United States*

McKenna Smith lives in the United States of America. She is currently in her final semester as the Graduate Assistant for the Mercy Center at St. Joseph's College of Maine and is finishing her master's in theology. She has a background that encompasses young adult ministry and the criminal justice system.

Through being a part of MELF, McKenna hopes to learn from other women and to become a better advocate for people incarcerated around the world who have forgotten their worth.

JEWELLYN ENEMECIO *Philippines*

Jewelilyn M. Enemecio is from Cebu City, Philippines. She currently works as an Administrative Aide in the Local Government of Cebu. She was trained as an experiential advocate in the year 2010 and started her first job in the United Nations Program for Children as an outreach worker. After which, she continued working at the Good Shepherd Welcome House.

Through MELF she wants to help in listening, finding ways to answer the calls, developing strength, and giving courage to the people who are the less, the least, and the last, who are still longing for Mercy and Justice.



TERESA VAUGHAN *New Zealand*

Teresa Vaughan lives in Wellington, New Zealand. She currently works for the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. She has a background in the public service and before that spent many years in a chemistry lab.

Through the Mercy Global Action Emerging Leaders Fellowship, Teresa hopes to broaden her understanding of the work that is currently being undertaken in this area and develop the necessary skills to contribute more effectively to this work. She is also looking forward to making connections with the other women in the programme.

ELIZABETH BLOM *Australia*

Libby Blom lives in Brisbane, Australia and works at Mercy Partners, a Public Juridic Person (PJP) founded by the Queensland Sisters of Mercy. She is committed to ensuring that their ministries stay true to their charism and continue to carry out God's mission in the future.

Libby views and attempts to live Mercy as a verb, embodying the qualities of generosity, forgiveness, guidance, protection, and giving to others. Libby's excited to join forces with fellow change-makers and mentors through the MELF to champion inclusive, sustainable and harmonious societies guided by mercy values.



FOZIA GULAB

Pakistan

Dr. Fozia Gulab serves at Notre Dame Institute of Education (NDIE) - Karachi as the Deputy Director. She is dedicated to professional ethics, standards of practice and care and education of the prospective teachers.

She is one of the founding members of Mercy Education where students from unprivileged families are helped with their studies. Dr. Gulab continues motivating her husband, son and daughter in the cause of reaching out to people in need by getting them actively involved in various activities. She is passionate about justice, peace, harmony, honesty and equity in the society.



SARAH TERRY

South Africa

Sarah Terry, from South Africa, is a Dramatic Arts and Mathematics teacher at St Teresa's, where she has been on the staff for twelve years. During this time, she has developed the Mercy Ambassadors' Programme, designed to benefit deserving pupils of the school, and which aims to build on the five core values of St Teresa's: collaboration, excellence, compassion, spiritual growth and global responsibility.

In undertaking MELF, Sarah hopes to develop the skills necessary to play an active role in advocacy for young women in leadership and to provide the opportunity to have their voices heard in the contexts of justice and mercy, both in the extremely complex South African context and globally.



JESSICA MARSHALL

Australia

Jess lives in Brisbane, Australia. She is currently the Assistant Principal of Religious Education at All Saints Parish School, a Catholic primary school, founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1989. Jess' commitment to Mercy stems from her experiences volunteering and working with those who face various forms of disadvantage.

By participating in the MELF, Jess aims to deepen her Mercy Spirituality and looks forward to being inspired by like-minded Mercy women in the program. She hopes to gain skills to cultivate a community of mercy and justice and empower the next generation who will, in turn, become our voices of advocacy and catalysts for positive change in the future.



Thematic Areas - Degradation of Earth

Image: Canva licence

INTRODUCING THE MERCY WATER JUSTICE COALITION



As we approach World Water Day 2024, *Mercy Global Action is pleased to announce the launch of the Mercy Water Justice Coalition*, our commitment to the United Nations Water Action Agenda and our response to the growing commodification, degradation, and depletion of Earth's precious water sources.

The aim of this Coalition is to identify 'Mercy Water Leaders' in all regions of the Mercy World. Mercy Water Leaders will be individuals (over the age of 18) who have an identified interest in water issues and are motivated to work alongside the MGA team to create and implement a 'Water Action Agenda' within their Mercy community – whether it be a Mercy school, university, congregation, ministry, or other organisation.

Through their Water Action Agenda, they will commit to several actions which raise awareness of the multiple values of water and advocate for a rights-based approach to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal #6: Clean Water & Sanitation.

We know that water has long been a focus for many Mercy communities, and so *our hope* is to consolidate these efforts, fostering a globally informed and unified 'Mercy voice' on water that is heard and valued at the United Nations...



LOOKING TO GET INVOLVED?

Are you passionate about water issues and eager to put your Mercy organisation on the map as part of the global Mercy Water Justice Coalition? Contact us at mercyrep@mercyinternational.ie and we will be in touch with you!





At the United Nations

THROUGH OUR ECOSOC LENS...

- Reflections on the 62nd Commission for Social Development & Civil Society Forum*

As a member of the NGO Committee on Social Development, MGA was pleased to participate in this year's Commission on Social Development (CSocD62), focused on "fostering social development and social justice through social policies" to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the overarching goal of poverty eradication.

Almost 30 years on from the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration and just 6 years out from the conclusion of 2030 Agenda, CSocD62 was characterised by discussions on the future of social development, the necessity for a second World Social Summit, and the need for ambitious structural reforms that are rooted in social justice.

It was also marked by a strong civil society presence. MGA was delighted to attend the Civil Society Forum; a day set aside for civil society representatives to discuss challenges and best practices, raise the voices of those rendered vulnerable, and emphasise the inherent dignity and human rights of all. We also attended a series of side events, on topics ranging from homelessness, to women's land rights, to local experiences of SDG implementation.

It was a successful Commission, producing robust resolutions on several fronts, including the establishment of next year's theme, and an unexpected commitment by Member-States to more deeply address the unpaid care economy shouldered by women and girls. Additionally, a Second World Summit for Social Development has since been approved for 2025.





• MELF Cohort 3 Embarks on NYC Immersion

The second immersion of Cohort 3 of the Mercy Global Action Emerging Leaders Fellowship is underway, taking place from March 6 to March 17 at the Mercy Global Action office in New York City, United States!

The theme for this immersion is "Empowering Women to Lead with Dignity". Fellows will be attending the 68th Commission on the Status of Women, as well as a number of other events at the United Nations and throughout the city.



As the Fellows embark on this journey of learning, advocacy and discernment, we pray that they are renewed in collaborative energy and empowered to lead with wisdom and dignity in their own communities and beyond. May the special energy generated during this time be amplified throughout the Mercy World to fill us all with hope and inspiration.

Continue to follow us on Instagram over the next couple of weeks to view updates of the Fellows' time together!

• MGA Holds Parallel Event Alongside CSW68

On March 15, we are pleased to be hosting an in-person parallel event during the UN Commission on the Status of Women, titled "Financing with Dignity: Aligning Capital & Values for Gender Justice." We're excited to share Mercy experiences of values-driven investment in gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The moderator of the event will be our own Jemima Welsh, and panelists will include Sr Marilyn Lacey rsm, Executive Director of Mercy Beyond Borders, Bryan Pini, President of Mercy Investment Services, Ciara Feehely, Head of Fundraising and Communications at VITA, and Elizabeth Garlow, Co-Founder of the Francesco Collaborative. A recording will be made available [here](#) on our website after the event.

The flyer features a purple and white color scheme with green accents. At the top, it says "MERCY INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION" with a cross logo. The main title is "FINANCING WITH DIGNITY: Aligning Capital & Values for Gender Justice". Below that, it says "A CSW68 Parallel Event". The text describes the event as a dialogue on faith, values, and economic investment. It lists the moderator, Jemima Welsh, and four panelists: Elizabeth Garlow, Bryan Pini, Sr Marilyn Lacey rsm, and Ciara Feehely. The event is on March 15, 2024, at the Chapel, Church Center for the United Nations, NY, from 12:30 to 2:00 PM EDT. The flyer also includes icons for a calendar, location, and clock.

Moderated by Jemima Welsh
Women's Leadership Development Associate, Mercy International Association

FEATURING:

- Elizabeth Garlow**
Co-Founder, Francesco Collaborative
- Bryan Pini**
President, Mercy Investment Services
- Sr Marilyn Lacey rsm**
Founder & Executive Director, Mercy Beyond Borders
- Ciara Feehely**
Head of Fundraising & Communications, VITA

Join us for a powerful dialogue on the intersection of faith, values, and economic investment in the pursuit of gender justice. Contributors will share how their faith-based organizations have harnessed capital to combat poverty and uplift women and girls around the world. Emphasizing the moral and developmental imperatives of gender equality, this event aims to inspire a shift towards inclusive, values-driven investment models that prioritize well-being and human dignity over profit maximization, contributing to a more resilient and just global economy.

March 15, 2024 | Chapel, Church Center for the United Nations, NY | 12:30 - 2:00PM EDT

- *Colleen Represents MGA at the MIA ‘Opening Doors’ Discussion*

On February 16, Colleen Swain, Leadership Development and Advocacy Associate at Mercy Global Action, attended the ‘Opening Doors’ discussion at Mercy International Centre in Dublin, Ireland. The ‘Opening Doors’ project focuses on consulting with those who are actively seeking to be involved in the life of Mercy International and creating channels through which people of Mercy can participate more actively in the life of the Association. Emerging themes for the future of Mercy International Association (MIA) include: Connection, Networking Communication, Formation, Justice, Archives and Heritage, Prayer and Spirituality. These form significant pathways to ensure a new, vital and creative way for the Mercy charism and the spirit of Catherine to be present in the world long into the future.

[Listen to Sr. Denise Fox](#) discuss the importance of Opening Doors with Leaders from Mercy Ministries from across the world!

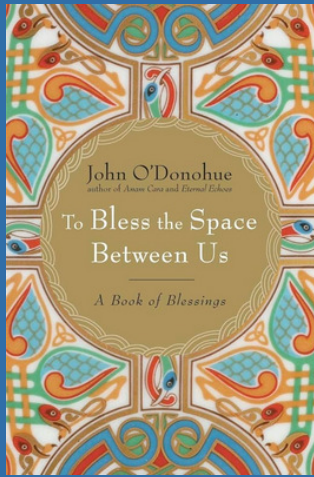
- **MERCY VOLUNTEER CORPS** *Visits the MGA Office!*

On February 22, Mercy Global Action had the pleasure of welcoming ten volunteers from Mercy Volunteer Corps into the office! Coming from various corners of the United States – including Baltimore, Cincinnati, New York, Philadelphia, and Savannah – these dedicated individuals have embarked on diverse assignments, ranging from education and healthcare support, to aiding migrants, cultivating urban gardens, and serving people experiencing homelessness. It was great to learn about their journeys as volunteers and to draw parallels between their work and the justice priorities of MGA.

In addition to watching a presentation about MGA’s work and engagement with the United Nations, the volunteers were able to head across the street for a guided tour of UN Headquarters! It was a wonderful day, and we hope to see these passionate young people engaging with MGA in the future through opportunities such as our workshops and task forces.



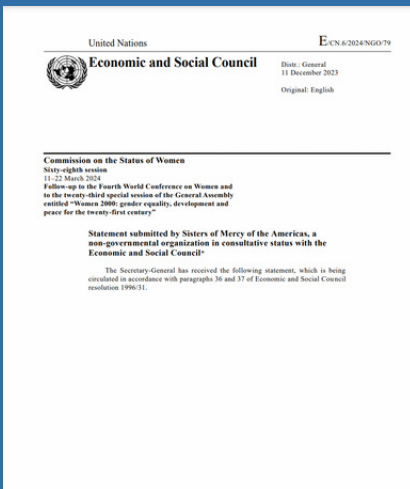
“USEFUL RESOURCES



[‘To Bless the Space Between Us’](#)
– A Book of Blessings by John O’Donohue



[JCoR Engagement Guide for the 68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women \(CSW68\)](#)



[MGA’s Statement for CSW68](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS & INTERNATIONAL HOLIDAYS

- **February 15-March 31: Lent**
- March 6-17: MELF Cohort 3 Fellows’ NYC immersion
- **March 11-22: 68th Commission on the Status of Women**
 - March 15: MGA’s CSW side-event: ‘Financing with Dignity: Aligning capital and values for gender justice’
- March 21: International Day of Forests
- March 22: World Water Day
- March 24: International Day for the Right to the Truth concerning Gross Human Rights Violations & for the Dignity of Victims
- March 25: International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade
- March 30: International Day of Zero Waste
- April 4: International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action



Mercy International Association (MIA) maintains a comprehensive and up to date website and produces an informative fortnightly e-newsletter (MercyNews). Visit our website to discover more about MIA and our global activities: www.mercyworld.org
Subscribe to our e-newsletter to learn about our vision in action and the ministries carried out by our member congregations:

[\[Link\]](#)