

MERCY GLOBAL ACTION NEWSLETTER

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GREETINGS FROM THE MERCY GLOBAL ACTION OFFICE!

Dear friends,

Welcome to the April issue of our newsletter! We hope you had a wonderful Easter holiday with family and friends. The MGA team enjoyed a small break following the March madness that was participating in the 68th Commission on the Status of Women and hosting Cohort 3 of the MGA Emerging Leaders Fellowship in New York for their second immersion.

Once again, the UN calendar has picked up. April will see the 23rd Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the UN General Assembly Sustainability Week, and the UN ECOSOC Youth Forum! We look forward to updating you on these events in our next edition. Until then, go gently, and we leave you with a post-Easter prayer from the wonderful Joyce Rupp...

*Every year it happens:
earth shakes her sleepy head,
still a bit wintered and dull,
and feels new life stirring.*

*Every year cocoons give up their treasures,
fresh shoots push through brown leaves,
seemingly dead branches shine with green,
and singing birds find their way home.*

*Every year we hear the stories:
empty tomb, surprised griever,
runners with news and revelation,*

*unexpected encounters,
conversations on the road,
tales of nets filling with fish,
and breakfast on a seashore.*

*And every year
the dull and dead in us
meets our Easter challenge:
to be open to the unexpected,
to believe beyond our security,
to welcome God in every form,
and trust in our own greening.*

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At the United Nations

THROUGH OUR ECOSOC LENS...

- *MGA Attends the 68th Commission on the Status of Women!*

Images: Mercy Global Action



From March 11 – 22, MGA had the pleasure of participating in the 68th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68), the UN’s largest annual gathering on gender equality. This year’s priority theme focused on accelerating gender equality and women’s empowerment by “addressing poverty, strengthening institutions, and financing with a gender perspective”. You can read MGA’s position statement for the Commission [here](#).

Throughout the Commission, prominent advocacy calls included the need to ramp up investments in women and girls, combat gender-based violence, address the feminisation of poverty (especially the role that unpaid care work plays in it), and rectify the inequalities engrained in the global financial architecture.

With the 9 women from Cohort 3 of the Mercy Emerging Leaders Fellowship here for their NYC immersion, MGA was represented by a large and enthusiastic delegation, enabling broad participation in a diverse array of side events. A memorable experience for many was hearing Malala Yousafzai, Pakistani education activist, speak in solidarity with women and girls in Afghanistan, emphasising the need to recognise ‘gender apartheid’ as a crime against humanity.

Several Fellows also resonated with an event titled “*Feminist Financing: The Cornerstone for Gender Justice*”, hosted by Oxfam: Reflecting on the event, one Fellow says, “Bhumika Muchhala from Third World Network shared her research on economic structures that not only harm women and girls, but harm our societies, cultures, and Earth. She described the neocolonial financial structures that view women’s care and nature as endless commodities for the benefit of the global north. Her message was that we cannot continue to put financial success above human rights and dignity. She suggested that we can transform our global economy with Feminist Finances that invest in the care economy, social services, reparations for culture and climate, and a guarantee of non-repetition of exploitative financial systems.”



Another highlight was hosting our own event, ‘*Financing with Dignity: Aligning Capital and Values for Gender Justice*’, moderated by our own Jemima Welsh, MGA Women’s Leadership Development and Advocacy Associate. The panel featured 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.

Our esteemed panellists did a brilliant job of bringing the Mercy perspective to the discourse on finance, emphasising the need for values-driven investment models that prioritise human dignity over profit maximisation if gender justice is to be achieved. There was a fantastic turn out at the event and some brilliant questions from the audience. Watch the event recording [here!](#)



• *MELF Cohort 3 Fellows reflect on their NYC Immersion*

The MGA team was thrilled to host Cohort 3 of the MGA Emerging Leaders Fellowship during their New York City immersion from March 6 to March 17. The theme of the program was “Leading with Dignity”.

During the immersion, Fellows participated in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women; an International Women’s Day celebration; a visit to Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty; an interfaith dialogue (featuring Prof Azza Karam and Anneke Kat); and presentations on the Mercy Ministry Focus on Haiti (Andi Healy); Ministry work of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas (Sr Terri Bednarz rsm); interculturality and racism (Sr Ivette Diaz rsm); and Mercy Global Action’s work on the degradation of Earth and displacement of people (Sr Angela Reed rsm, Izzy Salter and Cecilie Kern) and more! Read reflections from the Fellows below...

After a day full of listening to wise women, we reconvened for dinner. We shared stories and reflections for our sessions. It was a gift to be able to hear about other incredible events that other fellows attended. We were able to discuss what we felt challenged by and what invigorated us with hope as we can join many other women to make a more caring, hospitable, and compassionate world.

As a Sister of Mercy, I am very grateful to our partners, collaborators and friends. How could we be in solidarity with those in need if we do not have these faith-filled, passionate, courageous women collaborating with us.

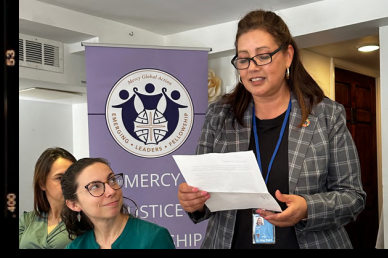
The richness of the experience at the UN CSW68 was shared during the opening prayer for the day. Many expressed feelings of gratitude for the whole experience and to the MELF team for organizing and for always being there to support, to listen or by just being present. Feelings of excitement for the added awareness gained through the different sessions attended and how the challenges from the experience can be shared and responded to. There were also feelings of frustration, disappointments, and even anger on how the poor people globally, especially the indigenous people are continuously ignored, excluded and displaced because of the government projects in the name of development, or policies.

A quote from the Talmud stands out to me from this immersion: “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.”

"A common learning... was the hardships being faced by women and young girls around the world that include restricted access to education, living in poverty and oppression."



"The tender Mercy of God, has given us one another."
Catherine McAuley



Images: Mercy Global Action



"When I think we are done, we seem to be beginning again."
Catherine McAuley to Frances Wade in February 1839

"For it has been empowered women, who have empowered women who led me, and us to take part in the Mercy Global Action Emerging Leaders Fellowship."



“ USEFUL RESOURCES



Watch MGA’s CSW68 Event
‘Financing with Dignity:
Aligning Capital & Values for
Gender Justice’



Guide to the 23rd Permanent
Forum on Indigenous Issues -
Justice Coalition of Religious



‘Human Development Report
2023/2024’ - United Nations
Development Programme



UPCOMING EVENTS & INTERNATIONAL HOLIDAYS

- April 15-19: UN General Assembly Sustainability Week
- April 15-26: 23rd Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
- April 16-18: UN ECOSOC Youth Forum
- April 22: International Mother Earth Day / Earth Day
- April 24: International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace

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