

MERCY GLOBAL ACTION NEWSLETTER

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Image: Shutterstock

GREETINGS FROM THE MERCY GLOBAL ACTION OFFICE!

Dear friends,

In this time of Advent, we are invited to embrace a time of anticipation and hope. Advent is a profound reminder of hope's transformative power – hope sustains us in the darkest of days and calls us to envision a world of renewal and grace.

Author Rebecca Solnit, in her reflections on hope, reminds us that “hope is not a lottery ticket you can sit on the sofa and clutch, feeling lucky. It is an axe you break down doors with in an emergency.” Her words resonate deeply in Advent, a season that calls us to active waiting.

Hope is not passive; it is dynamic, courageous, and resilient. It bridges the gap between the present and the possible, urging us to engage with the world as it is while working toward what it could be.

In our work at Mercy Global Action, hope is not a fleeting sentiment, but a steadfast force that compels us to connect, educate, and advocate for justice.



May your Christmas be one of steadfast love,
hope and justice.

– Sr Angela Reed rsm, Head of MGA

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MERCY GLOBAL ACTION EMERGING LEADERS FELLOWSHIP

APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR COHORT 5

DEADLINE TO APPLY:
JANUARY 24, 2025



The Mercy Global Action Office is now seeking expressions of interest for Cohort 5 of the MGA Emerging Leaders Fellowship (2025-2026)!

The Mercy Global Action Office is pleased to invite expressions of interest for the MGA Emerging Leaders Fellowship, a fully funded international leadership program designed to empower women to create positive change in their communities and build meaningful connections within the global Mercy World.

This transformative fellowship combines three international immersions, virtual webinars, interactive learning modules, mentorship, and more, providing a unique opportunity for personal and professional growth. Fellows are supported to expand their creative and critical thinking, enhance their collaborative leadership skills, and engage in deep personal and theological reflection. As a core component of the program, each Fellow undertakes a research project on a justice issue of their choice, applying their learning to a real-world problem that aligns with their passions and community needs.

If you or someone you know would be a great fit for this opportunity, please refer to the program information pack below for more details on how to apply:

[*View the Program Information Pack*](#)

Applications are due by January 24, 2025 to mariettalatonio@mercyinternational.ie

• MGA SUPPORTS THE 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is an annual global campaign that runs from November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, to December 10, Human Rights Day. The campaign highlights the urgent need to address GBV, which remains the most pervasive human rights violation worldwide.

The 2024 UNiTE campaign was aligned with the Beijing+30 review, stressing the need for stronger accountability in eradicating GBV. A key focus was femicide – the intentional killing of women and girls because of their gender. In 2023, over 51,000 women and girls were killed by an intimate partner or family member – *an average of 140 daily*. Yet, femicide is not inevitable. Driven by deep-rooted misogyny and harmful norms, it is preventable through early intervention, challenging social attitudes, and promoting a culture of zero tolerance for violence. The campaign also focused on the rise in technology-facilitated GBV and the prevalence of GBV in humanitarian settings.

Since its founding, the Mercy World has been committed to empowering women and girls to claim their rights and live free from violence. Through local, national, and global efforts, we continue to challenge harmful gender narratives and support survivors of GBV. Guided by Catherine McAuley’s vision, we stand alongside women and girls in the shared mission of creating a just and equitable world.



To view our campaign posts and find more resources, visit our [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) pages.

• *Reflections from Fozia Gulab, current MGA Emerging Leaders Fellow*

Dr. Fozia Gulab is a current MELF Fellow (Cohort 4) from Karachi, Pakistan. She works as Deputy Director and a faculty member at the Notre Dame Institute of Education (NDIE), the only Catholic institute in Pakistan that provides tertiary education. In this article, Fozia reflects on the history of Mercy in Pakistan, her experience of learning more about the Mercy charism through the MELF program, and her efforts to share Catherine McAuley’s story with her community.



Mercy Sisters and Educational Fraternity in Pakistan

“In the early 90s, Pakistan was blessed with the arrival of Mercy Sisters from Australia, who established a teacher education institute called the Notre Dame Institute of Education (NDIE). Sisters Gabrielle Jennings and Bernadette Marks were the pioneers of this institute, which soon became a beacon of light in the education community in Pakistan. Prior to its founding, Gabrielle and Bernadette shared stories about the status of education in the country and convinced other Sisters and community members to help make a difference.

The graduates of Mercy Sisters are now key leaders in the country’s education sector. Throughout Pakistan, the name ‘Mercy Sisters’ is associated with the group of women who are committed, visionary and goal-oriented leaders to whom people reach out to for guidance, who break the barriers of race, color, cast and religion to reach people in the need of their service, who empower people entrusted to their care, and inspire others through their lifestyle, attitude and behaviour.”

Discovering the Story Catherine’s Comfortable Cup of Tea

“The Mercy Sisters in Pakistan brought with them the vibrant tradition of staff and students gathering for morning tea. It is a time of laughter at silly jokes, sharing chocolates from Australia and other countries, celebrating cultural events, rejoicing in Australia and Pakistan’s cricket victories, and discussing modern trends in teaching and their application in the local context.

I always questioned, “why is the cup of tea so special to Mercy Sisters?” I never heard anyone say “I don’t take tea/coffee”, or “I’m too busy for tea”. My question was answered during the first overseas immersion of the MELF program, when I encountered a book titled ‘Be as Shining Lamps: Preserving, Nurturing, and Reimagining the Mercy Charism’ and I learnt that Catherine McAuley’s legacy of sharing a cup of tea is about celebrating relationships. NDIE proudly maintains this legacy of hospitality symbolized by the cup of tea.”



Images: Fozia Gulab

Letting God’s Mercy be Known to the World

Fozia has long opened her home as a ‘house of Mercy’ to community members, particularly for the purposes of educating youth. Since returning from Cambodia on the first MELF immersion, Fozia has facilitated four sessions, some in partnership with the local priest and other community members, looking at the concept of Mercy from the lens of Catherine McAuley and sharing reflections on her time in Cambodia.

THEMATIC AREAS

DEGRADATION OF EARTH



Image: Canva license

- *Updates from COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan*

In November, governments, UN agencies, and various stakeholders—including civil society, private sector, academics, and grassroots communities—gathered for the annual Conference of the Parties (COP) under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. COP29, held in Baku, Azerbaijan, was a pivotal yet contentious moment in global climate negotiations.

One of the major outcomes of COP29 was the adoption of a pledge by developed nations to mobilize at least \$300 billion annually by 2035 to support climate adaptation and mitigation in developing countries. Although this figure was framed as a tripling of previous commitments, critics argue that it is insufficient when compared to the \$1.3 trillion needed to transition to a green economy and adapt to climate impacts. Furthermore, the pledge heavily relies on pre-existing commitments and does not account for inflation, diminishing its practical impact. Faith-based and civil society organizations continue to call for more equitable and immediate finance, emphasizing the moral obligation to assist low-income and climate-vulnerable communities. They also play a critical role in ensuring that these pledges result in on-the-ground impacts and transparency in fund distribution.

Another key development at COP29 was the establishment of a framework for global carbon credit trading to incentivize emission reductions. However, concerns about fairness and equity arose. This new market presents opportunities for community-led projects such as reforestation and sustainable agriculture. The global Mercy community can advocate for the recognition and support of these initiatives in the new framework.

Climate mobility is a growing area of interest at COP, including discussions on strategies to protect vulnerable populations impacted by climate displacement. Delegates emphasized the need for mobility to be integrated into national climate strategies, and specific attention was given to the Global Goal on Adaptation, which includes provisions for displacement-related mobility solutions. Progress was made in operationalizing the Loss and Damage Fund, although funding mechanisms remain unresolved.

COP29 underscored the urgency for greater global collaboration and accountability in addressing climate challenges. It highlighted divisions between developed and developing nations, with the latter expressing dissatisfaction with the pace of progress. As COP30 approaches in Brazil, the Mercy World will continue pushing for justice-driven policies and ensuring that commitments lead to real change for those most affected.

USEFUL RESOURCES:



Facts and Figures: Ending Violence Against Women
- UN Women



Open Letter on COP reform to All States that are Parties to the Convention
- The Club of Rome



Advent through the lens of Mercy

Advent Reflection Series
- Mercy International Association



UPCOMING EVENTS & INTERNATIONAL HOLIDAYS

- December 18: International Migrants Day
- December 20: International Human Solidarity Day
- **December 25: Christmas Day**
- December 27: International Day of Epidemic Preparedness
- **December 31: New Year's Eve**
- January 24: Applications due for MGA Emerging Leaders Fellowship



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:

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