WALKING IN MERCY

Institute Office of Association Quarterly Newsletter September 2026

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CCASA Spirituality Centers

By Maria del Carmen Perez, Mercy Associate

The Sisters of Mercy of the Americas have 10 Spirituality Centers, and two of them belong to CCASA: Our Lady of Guadalupe Spirituality Center in Belize and the Mercy Spirituality Center in Argentina.

Part of the ministry of these centers is the development of Mercy spirituality resources that are shared with the community of sisters and associates throughout the Americas in both Spanish and English.

Both centers offer a variety of programs through workshops, retreats, gatherings, courses, and rituals. They also meet monthly to plan and coordinate joint projects. Our Lady of Guadalupe Center was directed from its founding by Sister Sarita Vázquez. Dorothy Badley has now assumed the role of director, while Sister Sarita continues to serve the center through her guidance and support. Its primary ministry is working with children and young people.



Sisters and Associates united in circles, sharing, learning, and deepening the spirit of Mercy.

The Mercy Spirituality Center, coordinated by Cristina Hereñu and Florencia Salinas, operates in two ways. On the one hand, it rents its facilities to groups for retreats and formation programs. On the other, it offers opportunities and experiences for people to deepen their Mercy spirituality.

The center invites participants to encounter the sacred through nature. Care for Our Common Home is a monthly experience offered through open, free, and accessible gatherings that explore eco-spirituality from the perspective of caring for creation and recognizing the ancestral wisdom of Indigenous peoples.

The center also offers workshops, including art therapy, Share Your Gift, contemplative prayer gatherings, and other activities that help keep the spirit of Mercy alive. The center serves young people and adults, especially women. It has a preferential commitment to ensuring that young people and economically disadvantaged women's groups have a welcoming place where they can experience an encounter with the sacred.

Companions in Mercy: A Journey of Commitment, Community, and Compassion

By Paula Chermside, Mercy Companion

Founded in May of 2005, Companions in Mercy make a commitment to God which is inspired by the charism of Mercy. This commitment is manifested by a life of service and prayer and sealed with a vow of Mercy. Companions in Mercy are a community of individuals joining together along life's path, searching for greater meaning and a deeper relationship with God. Our commitment is to follow the example of Catherine McAuley: to bring mercy and be mercy whenever and wherever possible.

Much like Catherine, "we make our way by going," and we have had to continuously discern what this call means in our lives and in our unique time. We have the history and wisdom of the Sisters of Mercy to guide us, as well as our own lived experience in forming this newer expression of Mercy. Trust in the immense mercy of God invites us to move forward without hesitation and to remain open to the movement of the Spirit in our lives.

Joining the Companions in Mercy is a personal call to become part of an intentional community committed to supporting one another in our commitment. Each companion takes a permanent vow of mercy, professing a personal promise and solemn commitment to live a life focused on mercy and to serve the poor, the sick, and the uneducated for the whole of their life.

This vow is received by the Companions in Mercy and in the presence of others who share the charism of Mercy. This vow gives stability to companions as a path of mercy life.

In living out this commitment, companions seek a life shaped by prayer, community, the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, and offer their gifts, talents, energy, and vision to extend God's mercy to our world. Companions embrace the invitation of living simply, loving faithfully, and listening to the Spirit.

Our mercy vow is a lived reality of our values which includes Mercy charism, community, spirituality, and mutuality. Companions in Mercy are a non-canonical form of Mercy life.

Companions meet in person twice a year for a long weekend of prayer, reflection, and community building, and those who cannot attend join by Zoom. In between these weekends, companions stay in touch through monthly round robins and a monthly Zoom meeting to foster community building and spiritual growth and to discern our responses to world and life events. Companions participate with others committed to the charism of Mercy, including Sisters of Mercy and Mercy Associates in the communities in which they live and through Conversation Circles and Mercy gatherings.



Companions and Associates together in faith, service, and mercy.

Associates Encounter the Immigration Journey in San Diego's Barrio Logan

By Marcel Viens, Mercy Associate

On Friday, May 8, eight of our Eagles traveled to San Diego's Barrio Logan to learn more about the immigration issue. Our host was Sister Mary Waskowiak, a Sister of Mercy who established Casa Misericordia to assist immigrants with the myriad of issues and obstacles they face.

The day started with a quick stop at Chicano Park just below the start of the Coronado Bridge. The support pilings and adjacent area are painted with a rich history, sharing stories of culture, community, and resilience. Sister Mary welcomed us at Salon Tepeyac, originally a facility that housed immigrants overnight, and now serves meals, provides support, camaraderie, and kinship. Father Scott Santarosa, SJ, joined us to share about the parish's rich history with the immigrant community and ongoing efforts on their behalf.

We then ventured a few miles south to the "Border Wall," as Sister Mary shared stories about the wall, crossings, and interactions with U.S. Border Patrol and ICE. The experience provided an opportunity to learn more about the realities faced by immigrants.

We returned to Salon Tepeyac for a traditional homemade Mexican lunch. We received a visit from a female immigrant who was a victim of trafficking. Her story of abuse as a child, and then being trafficked as a young girl, provided us with an opportunity to see the face of such trauma and to ask questions. She now assists and counsels others who have suffered similar experiences. It was an eye-opener.



Students pose with Sister Mary during their visit to Barrio Logan.



Verbum Dei students visit the Pope Francis Center in Barrio Logan.

Then it was off to the newly established Pope Francis Center that will provide services for immigrants, refugees, and those seeking asylum. Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish is using their former convent to accommodate the services as a part of their parish outreach.

Father Scott met with us again to share more details about all that goes on in the "Barrio" parish to serve the immigrant community.

Sister Mary took us on a tour to see the entire facility. Back at Salon Tepeyac, we were visited by a senior at the University of California San Diego who is originally from El Salvador and shared the nightmare situation she and her mother experienced there. They traveled by bus and by foot to the U.S. seeking a better life. Her story was eye-opening, and we were provided time to ask questions and learn more about her experiences.

Before departing, we visited the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe adjacent to the parish church. This experience in Barrio Logan was a meaningful opportunity to listen, learn, and encounter the stories of immigrants and those who walk alongside them in the spirit of Mercy.



Students visit the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

History of the Associates of Mercy in La Ceiba

By Carlos Luis Padilla, Mercy Associate



Associates & Sister in La Ceiba, Honduras.

When referring to associates, it is essential to echo the historical mark that the Sisters of Mercy have left in the historical annals of La Ceiba. The Sisters of Mercy arrived in Honduras in 1959 at the invitation of the Standard Fruit Company, now Dole, to take charge of the company's hospital, Vicente Dantoni, because of the sisters' extensive experience in healthcare in the United States. However, once they were already in the city, they realized that the young women attending the Nursing School lacked academic preparation at a more complete level.

This is how the idea that would later become a reality arose—the founding of the María Regina Institute in 1960. Over the years, they made a number of contributions to the country, with the generations of graduates from that institution and the nursing school. Similarly, they collaborated, joining efforts with the Autonomous University of Honduras, and this is how the Faculty of Nursing was born.



Serving with faith, compassion, and hope in La Ceiba.





Associates faith, mercy, and hope in action.

The association group in La Ceiba was founded on May 1, 2022, on the Memorial of San José Obrero, or St. Joseph the Worker, in La Ceiba. The only association group in Honduras was in San Pedro Sula until the one in La Ceiba was founded. The associates focus their work on spiritual formation and the works of mercy for the poorest. An important aspect for the group in La Ceiba is to put into practice both the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. We focus our service on those most in need and promote this charism of mercy in our surroundings. Every two months we meet to receive specific training with the goal of growing in faith as a group, while also fostering a life of prayer and the dignified reception of the sacraments in our members, since we firmly believe that our works and efforts can only be sustained by God's providence and the help of Our Lady of Mercy.

In our Mercy Associates group, we always have the support of Sister Marjorie DeStout, whose ministry has been dedicated to education in the city of La Ceiba for more than 60 years. She served as principal for 36 years, and the excellence of the institution is largely thanks to her. She then led the faith pastoral program at the institution with great care, totaling 57 years of service. Her example and guidance strengthen our Associates group.
Our group of associates has been growing since its founding in 2022, and it continues to grow. We hope it keeps going so we can bring Catalina's legacy of mercy to every corner of La Ceiba that we can and be beacons of hope where all hope seems to be lost.

By Kathy Schongar, Mercy Associate

Today, we celebrate Mercy!

Mercy continues to whisper
on the winds of time and eternity…
Catherine answered the call
tending the flame with tender courage,
trusting in Providence.

Today, we affirm Catherine's vision.
Called from different countries,
cultures and traditions,
Mercy comes in many hues.
Each thread adds color, texture
and depth to the design of the tapestry
that is Mercy in our day.
Together, we strive to be
the heart and hands of Jesus in the world.

Today, we encourage one another
and those we serve
to mine their gifts, to share their talents.
To let their unique light shine,
illuminating the dark spaces with grace.

Today, we bless all of Creation, and thank God
Who calls each of us by name.
We remember those who
paved a path for us.
We bless those who walk with us.
They teach us resilience, patience
and the power of true presence.

Today, we celebrate Mercy!
Mercy given substance in prayer and action,
in us and through us.
Mercy shared is Love made manifest.



Photo source: Canva

By Kathy Schiro, Mercy Associate

As Mercy Day approaches, it seems the perfect time to express gratitude and immeasurable thanks to the former Executive Director of Mercy Association, Tylia Oladipo.


Tylia Barnes Oladipo

In her many roles, depending on the season of change she led us through, Ty guided us with her heart and soul. Her deep Christian roots were the foundation for her communication with sisters, associates and staff as sacredness, respect and dignity always shone through. In interactions with others, her light was ablaze with acceptance and welcome.

To quote Mary Sullivan, RSM as she spoke about Catherine McAuley, “She believed that Sisters of Mercy, and those who wish to be associated with us, are called to find this great love of God, and to bring this great love and consolation of God in and to all those who suffer.” She could have been speaking about Ty.

Besides her leadership in interpersonal ways, her years of organizational skills became a gift as collaborating with other leaders, she set a foundation for Mercy Association that can easily be morphed into the needs of a changing future.

As we’re all called to live Mercy by entering the chaos of another, let us remember the love we felt from Ty in her role as Executive Director. Her light still shines brightly in North Carolina, and her name will always bring a smile to our hearts. With the Community of Mercy celebrating our 200th anniversary next year, thoughts of Ty and her accomplishments for the Mission of Mercy will recall her grace freely given during the last 15 years. We are so grateful!

With Gratitude to Mary Elizabeth O’Connor

The Walking in Mercy newsletter committee extends its heartfelt gratitude to Mary Elizabeth O’Connor as she retires from her work on our quarterly publication.
We are deeply appreciative of the poems, articles, and interviews she has shared over the years.

Mary Elizabeth was instrumental in creating the newsletter’s new, cleaner, and easier-to-read format, and her creativity and imaginative ideas have enriched every issue.

She will be greatly missed, and we hope her writing and insights will grace the pages of Walking in Mercy again in the future, continuing to inspire us all.

Thank you, Mary Elizabeth, for your dedicated service and many contributions!



June 22, 2026

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Annette Clark

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Catherine Mea Czerepak

Jackie Ostick

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May 17, 2026
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June 1, 2026
Kathleen Haider (Grass Valley, CA)

June 18, 2026
Madeline Murphy (Eastport, ME)

July 1, 2026
Joanne Hoffman (Rochester, NY)

July 5, 2026
Kathryn Harrison (Baltimore, MD)

July 6, 2026
Caroline Bailey (Rochester, NY)
Judith Clark (Rochester, NY)

July 12, 2026
Edel O'Toole (St. Albans, MO)

July 22, 2026
Alexandra Catala (Cranston, RI)

July 24, 2026
Clementina Salloum (Pittsburgh, PA)

July 28, 2026
Bill Burmeister (Roseville, CA)

From the Newsletter Committee

Let us pray for peace and mercy throughout the world.

PRAYER FOR ASSOCIATION



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Do you have a suggestion for our newsletter? Leave us a message below:

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Sisters of Mercy Hermanas de la Misericordia