We celebrate and give thanks on Mercy Day

On Sunday, September 24, we celebrate Mercy Day. At one time in the church, September 24 was the feast of Our Lady of Mercy, and it’s also the date on which Catherine McAuley opened the first House of Mercy on Baggot Street, 190 years ago.

What do we celebrate as we mark this special day? First, we give thanks for the mercy of God and for his showering us with loving kindness and compassion. We celebrate the life of Catherine McAuley—a woman who embodied the mercy of God in her person and in all of her service to those most vulnerable. We celebrate those who have followed in her footsteps over the past 190 years and all the ways in which the merciful reign of God has been made manifest in her name.

As we mark this special day with reflection and gratitude, we ask ourselves: Do I truly see those most vulnerable and in need? Do I respond to such suffering with compassion and action? On this day, we recall the gracious mercy of God in the many ways it appears, and we give thanks for our remarkable heritage. Happy Mercy Day!
In memoriam

Sister Barbara Karleskint died Friday, September 8, 2017, at Catherine’s Residence in St. Louis, Missouri. A Sister of Mercy for 80 years, she was 98 years old.

Sister Barbara entered the Sisters of Mercy in Fort Scott, Kansas. For nearly 30 years, she ministered as a teacher and principal in Kansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. She then entered pastoral ministry, serving as chaplain at Mercy Hospital in Fort Scott from 1978 to 1994.

Following her retirement from active ministry in 2006, she began taking formal art lessons and became an accomplished artist.

An extended obituary is included with today’s attachments.

Ministry shines light on troubled neighborhood

Sister Carol Ann Callahan ministers as a social worker at St. Augustine Wellston Center, a few miles from Ferguson, Missouri, where the Michael Brown shooting took place in 2014. Wellston, north of St. Louis, is economically poor, crime-ridden and drug-riddled. St. Augustine Wellston is an outreach center, serving members of five Catholic parishes that collapsed into one more than 25 years ago.

Along with Sister Carol Ann, the staff includes two sisters from Notre Dame School (now closed), two men who transport furniture and supplies, and many volunteers. The volunteers help sort clothing and household items, fill grocery bags and do countless other jobs.

“We have the most dedicated volunteers, whom we could not do without,” Sister Carol Ann says.

To read more about Sister Carol Ann and her ministry, click on the blue words below:

Sister Carol Ann Callahan

Justice update

Millions lack housing

Each year, according to the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, at least 2.5 million to 3.5 million Americans sleep in shelters, transitional housing, in parks and on streets. An additional 7.4 million have lost their homes and are doubled up with others because of economic necessity. Working people account for about 25% of the homeless; 11% are veterans; and 38% are families. More than a million children are homeless, many unaccompanied by adults. The causes of homelessness include wage stagnation, rising costs of rental housing and home
ownership, and the decreasing federal and state funding of affordable housing grants and vouchers. St. Pope John Paul II stated: “A house is much more than a simple roof over one’s head (but) also serves to found … that person’s deepest identity and his or her relations with others.” The attachment shows the impact of homelessness across all the Critical Concerns.

**Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals**
Last week, DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) was rescinded as of March 6, 2018. DACA allowed nearly 790,000 young people to receive work authorization and protection from deportation for two years with a renewal possibility. It was available to law-abiding children and young adults brought into the country at an early age by unauthorized immigrants. However, DACA recipients had no road to lawful permanent resident status or to U.S. citizenship. The Dream Act of 2017 was introduced into Congress in July to allow them to become legal residents and have a path to citizenship. The Dream Act, like DACA, has conditions, including no criminal record, arrival in the U.S. at a young age, and an application fee. Attached is the story of “Maria,” who benefited from DACA. For more information about the Dream Act, click on the blue words below:

[Dream Act](#)

**Associates hold 1st Assembly**
Eighty associates representing 13 states gathered in Belmont, North Carolina, for the first Mercy Associate Assembly, September 15–17, 2017. The theme was “Building One Community in Mercy.”

Sister Marilyn Lacey, RSM, founder and executive director of Mercy Beyond Borders, presented the keynote address on Thursday, “Pay Attention: The Cost of Being Mercy in Our World.” She said it’s important to be grounded in God’s love and mercy in order to pay attention to others without harming or demeaning them.

The associates also heard a talk by Ericka Alston-Buck, chief executive officer of Maryland Community Health Initiatives Inc.

In addition, they participated in a service project, planting a vegetable garden to supplement the food pantry at Reeder Memorial Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina. It’s surrounded by a low-income neighborhood where it’s a challenge to obtain healthy food, said Mercy Association Director Ty Barnes.

**University honors sister**
The University of Holy Cross honored the late Sister Theresa Mary DuRapau with the Cor Et Mente (Heart and Mind) Award. Sister Theresa Mary, who died in 2008 was a former faculty member at the university in New Orleans, Louisiana.

In a letter to her brother, V.J. DuRapau Jr., University President David “Buck” Landry said Sister Theresa Mary epitomized respect for all people, quality education, inclusive community,
emphasis on concern for the poor and social justice, and faith in the presence of God. He said the award was presented “in grateful appreciation for her faithfulness to the University of Holy Cross, the Marianite Sisters, and the Sisters of Mercy, through qualities of loyalty, leadership, commitment and service.”

Jubilarians celebrate

In St. Louis, Missouri: Seven sisters gathered on Labor Day weekend to celebrate their Golden Jubilee. Pictured are: (back row) Sister Rose Marie Tresp (left) and Sister Cheryl Quave; (middle row, from left) Sister Rosemary Welsh, Sister Amelia Zepeda and Sister Elizabeth Koehler; (front row) Sister Jane Briseno (left) and Sister Ginger Andrews.

In Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Sister Mary Charlene Stephan (left), celebrated her 80-year Jubilee, and Sister Mary Judith Guilfoyle marked 75 years as a Sister of Mercy on September 7, 2017.

‘Puzzler’ invites exploration

The word “puzzle” contains an element of mystery. One seeks to solve it, to be caught up in its intriguing twists and turns, to discover the connections between one piece and another. The “Master Puzzler” is the one who has designed the most beautiful masterpiece that will one day be unveiled for all to see.

In her book The Master Puzzler, Sister Mary Naomi Buniff invites the reader to enter into the mystery, to read Holy Scripture with new eyes and discover greater depths as the puzzles in your own life blend into this most beautiful of all masterpieces. Working with “live” pieces can be quite challenging, but the Master Puzzler does this with perseverance, patience and mercy. The “live pieces” cooperate as invitations are accepted, rejoiced in and shared.
Sister Mary Naomi has been a Sister of Mercy for more than 60 years and lives at McAuley Convent in Cincinnati, Ohio, where she serves as archivist. She taught in elementary schools for 20 years, ministered in pastoral care in hospitals and served in parish ministry for 14 years.

You can purchase *The Master Puzzler* for $10 by check, payable to Sisters of Mercy. Order from: Sister Mary Naomi Buniff, McAuley Convent, 1768 Cedar Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45224.

### Season of creation

*Sister Corlita Bonnarens led a Season of Creation prayer service on the grounds of Mercy Center St. Louis on September 14, 2017. Sisters, Mercy associates and co-workers joined in reading the Litany of Praise for Creation by Kathleen Fischer and Prayer for Our Earth from Pope Francis’ encyclical, *Laudato Si*. The prayer service was next to a shrine for St. Francis of Assisi, patron saint of animals and nature, constructed by Sister Corlita and the maintenance staff at Mercy Center.*

### Anti-racism seminar on Guam

Some 40 Guam participants met recently with trainers Robette Dias and Jessica Torres to tackle the issue of anti-racism and its implications for the island. The trainers were assisted by three Sisters of Mercy who had undergone anti-racism training with Crossroads International, sponsored by the Institute: Sister Trinie Pangelinan from Guam and Sister Helen Libo-on and Sister Virgencita Alegado from Mindanao, Philippines.

Participants included other Sisters of Mercy, Mercy associates and ministry partners from Mercy schools and daycare centers. “Although the seminar was less than three days, it seems endless as we were challenged, provoked, enriched, and encouraged to tackle the issue of systemic racism,” Sister Trinie said.

Participants were encouraged to share their knowledge among those with whom they minister. The workshop concluded with a tree planting to commemorate the “Season of Creation” with the signing of pledges to “care for our Earth home.”

### Making Mercy real

Sister Nancy Nance has formed a special bond with Lorraine Giannini, a resident at Holy Angels.
in Belmont, North Carolina, and her family. To read about them in #MakeMercyReal through Friendship, part of a special Mercy Day series on the Institute website, click on the blue words below:

#MakeMercyReal

Today’s attachments

• Directory changes for September 21, 2017
• Extended obituary for Sister Barbara Karleskint
• “We Don’t Stand Alone: A Dreamer’s Story”
• Reflection guide on impact of homeless on Critical Concerns

Share your Mercy Day stories and (action!) photos with us

We look forward to receiving your stories and photos for enews. Because of its format and short preparation time, our word limit is about 150 words per story.

We encourage you to send action photos—not posed ones—which help us all get to know one another better and draw attention to your content.

Please send them to Beth Thompson, writer/communications strategist, at bthompson@mer-cysc.org by Friday, September 29, 2017, for the next issue of enews, which comes out Thursday, October 5, 2017.

Don’t forget to include the “Five Ws”—who, what, where, when and why—and please identify everyone pictured from left to right. Thanks!
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2629 Pennington Bend Road  
Nashville, TN 37214-1107  
615.885.1863        |
| Sr. Lillian | Quadrella | New home phone  | Sisters | 912.2234.3508                                |
Will we all meet in heaven?
Oh what joy even to think of it.

Catherine McAuley

Sister Barbara Karleskint
Religious Sister of Mercy
May 3, 1919 – September 8, 2017

Sister Barbara Karleskint, a Sister of Mercy for nearly 80 years, had two sisters in religious life, the late Sister Mary Bernadette, RSM, and Sister Mary Alfreda, CSJ.

Born in Miami, Oklahoma, to Joseph and Mary (Hickman) Karleskint, Sister Barbara entered the Sisters of Mercy on June 20, 1937, in Fort Scott, Kansas, and pronounced her first vows on March 12, 1940. She was known as Sister Mary Clarence at that time.

She earned a bachelor’s degree in home economics from St. Mary of the Woods College in Indiana and a master’s degree in elementary education from the University of St. Mary’s in Xavier, Kansas. She also received a certificate of pastoral education in 1977 from St. John’s Hospital in Springfield, Missouri.
Sister Barbara’s ministries included teaching for more than 25 years in elementary and secondary schools in Louisiana, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. She also ministered at Mercy Center in St. Louis, Missouri, and St. Elizabeth’s Hospital in Hutchinson, Kansas. After completing courses in clinical pastoral counseling, Sister Barbara became a chaplain at Mercy Hospital in Fort Scott. In addition, she completed a sabbatical year at Mercy Center in Madison, Connecticut.

When Sister Barbara’s mother became ill, she returned to Fort Scott to help care for her. At that time, she became active in the parish’s Charismatic Prayer Group and found her relationship with God in the Trinity more meaningful, peaceful and happy.

Following her retirement from active ministry in 2006, Sister Barbara began taking formal art lessons and became an accomplished artist. She shared this gift with the Community, as well as her family and friends.

When asked how would she like to be remembered by her Community and those with whom she ministered, she responded: “I would like to be remembered by my Community as being a loyal, affirming and happy Sister of Mercy, sensitive to the needs of the sisters.

“Toward my co-ministers, I wish to be considerate, helpful, just, patient, and thoughtful of them.

“To those with whom I minister, I hope to be an attentive listener, compassionate, understanding and cheerful.”

Those who knew Sister Barbara can attest that she was faithful in fulfilling the personal goals she set. Her peaceful death was testimony to witnessing the fullness of life.

**Funeral Mass:** September 9, 2017, Catherine’s Residence Chapel
St. Louis, Missouri

**Interment:** St. Mary’s Cemetery, Fort Scott, Kansas
“I want to go with you! I want to go with you!” I screamed to my older sister at five years old.

“No, you need to stay. You need to be brave. Our mom is going to come for us and you need to be here to take care of her” my sister replied.

My sister, a mere 12 years old died from Tetanus shortly after this response on her way to a hospital in Mexico.

My mother raised me and wanted the best for me and my siblings. We had nothing and my father spent most of what we did have on drink. My mother wanted to care for us and so she took the risk of crossing the Rio Bravo (Rio Grande) in search of work and a place to bring our family back together in the U.S. We lived with my dad until he got jealous and ran after her to the U.S. My siblings and I were left with our godparents. Our neighbors taunted us with comments that our parents were very happy without us.

I remember the day in my life when I felt my absolute worst and the most overwhelming joy - It was the same day. My younger sister had died a year earlier, my next in line sister had just died of Tetanus, my older sister had left me with godparents, and my parents were in the U.S. I had never felt so alone.

I was standing under banana trees where I lived, when in the distance I noticed a woman walking. This woman was wearing the most brilliant green dress with light shining behind her. I thought it was God. I thought this woman is my savior. This memorable moment was interrupted by someone grabbing my arm and telling me, “That is your mother. She is going to take you to the U.S.”

“Mijita, mijita!” I ran to my mom and she wrapped me in her arms.

I travelled to the U.S. on the safety of my brother’s shoulders as we crossed the Rio Bravo. My little legs sank knee deep in the mud as we arrived on the banks of the U.S. side of the river.
My mother led us to the apartment she had been renting where we discovered the community she shared with others living a similar life. They had created community for one another when so many had been separated from the only family they had known. My father was there too.

Immediately I began school and loved it. I loved learning. I especially enjoyed math and dreamed of becoming a math teacher. School provided an escape from the fear I often encountered when I returned home. My parents worked in the fields from 5am to 10pm everyday. When I walked to the door after school many times there would be a note for me, “Immigration took your parents, stay inside, eat something, and don’t talk to anyone. Your parents will come back later.”

The fear of separation crept in again. I learned quickly that there are many fears in life and if you let them sink in they will sweep you away.

I continued going to school but people in my neighborhood would tease me. “why are you going to school? You are not going to be anything here in the U.S.” I was an A and B honor roll student. In the sixth grade the teasing continued from my peers, my neighborhood and my teachers. I dropped out. My 7th grade year I went to the fields to work with my mom instead of school.

In 2012, I learned that President Obama created the program for DACA, a permit for children that arrived here before age 16 and who had a diploma or GED. I was angry with myself because I didn’t finish high school. So I decided to get my GED. I studied very hard because I really wanted a permit to work. I studied and passed the GED in four months. I applied for DACA and after a year I received my permit.

The opportunity to get a job that allowed me to discover my gifts gives great purpose to life. This purpose is not only serving but outward living. My job also encouraged me to keep learning and develop my leadership skills - an encouragement I had not experienced in my past. I enjoy serving my community through this work of empowering people to be civically engaged for a better life.

September 5th, 2017, the announcement that DACA was rescinded passed the screen of my phone. Fear hit my stomach and I felt like everything was falling apart. I have worked hard to get to where I am in life and so have my parents. I am with my family and we are able to care for one another. This announcement made me feel as if all of my efforts would be reversed. Today, I am an adult and I have responsibilities for my home, my car, taxes, and my community but my greatest worry is my family. My parents have sacrificed many things to give me and my siblings a sufficient life but they are aging and now I need to care for them.

The decision for DACA is uncertain and this uncertainty I have known well in my life - the uncertainty of being together with my family. My hope is there will be a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers that feels secure just as I did when my mother scooped me up in her arms. I hope that God will transform Congress’ hearts to better understand the importance of keeping families together. Family is the soil where we sink our roots. Dreamers - We Don’t Stand Alone.

This first person account was submitted from ARISE, a Sisters of Mercy cosponsored ministry in South Texas.
According to the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, each evening across the United States, 1,750,000 men, women, and children come from job searches, work, and school to a shelter or a public space. They have no home, no place of their own. Homelessness touches each of our Critical Concerns. Please spend some time considering this issue and, in doing so, reflect on the question “What is not being done to help others live a better life?”

**IMMIGRATION**
- Fear of deportation and misconceptions about housing eligibility leave immigrants susceptible to housing discrimination and homelessness.
- Fear of deportation not only endangers the homeless person but also the friend who takes the homeless person in “until the landlord notices additional occupants.”

**EARTH**
- Homeless persons have higher rates of chronic health conditions, greater exposure to extreme weather and poorer protection from the elements, according to the National Coalition for the Homeless.
- Disrupted weather patterns will impact agriculture and force persons to migrate to other lands and risk homelessness.

**RACISM**
- Disproportionate poverty and homelessness among persons of color will continue unless racial equity is addressed.
- Homelessness is structural racism stemming from poverty, housing and employment discrimination and lack of access to affordable housing.

**NONVIOLENCE**
- Shelters are overcrowded, and the national average of homeless persons who have no place to sleep is more than 40%. Many cities have adopted bans on sleeping in parks and cars, which addresses the situation of a homeless person as a criminal issue rather than a social issue, and leads to potential harassment and punishment from authorities.
- In addition to the experience of domestic violence, when a victim decides to leave their abuser, they often lose their home and sense of security. They can experience additional insecurity as they wait for the possibility of a new home.

**WOMEN**
- There is a hidden homeless population of mothers and children. As mothers struggle to find shelters and temporary work, children struggle with embarrassment and isolation.
- Health issues, such as asthma and speech problems, occur at higher rates in children who are homeless.
- Access to education is a challenge for homeless children, who are more likely to get poor grades, be held back and drop out of school.

Impact of Homelessness Reflection Guide
From Sisters of Mercy Mid-Atlantic Community Critical Concerns Committee
August 2015