Isaiah reminds us to give, not just give up

During this season of Lent, we often are tempted to fall back to the practices of our youth that focused on “giving up” something. In current times, we are called by the ancient words of Isaiah from the reading for Friday, February 28, to renew our Lenten commitment in a spirit of giving.

This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; Setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; Sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; Clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own.

~Isaiah 58

March 5, 2020
SUPPORTING THE RIGHT TO VOTE
The right of all U.S. citizens to vote has been a long, hard-fought struggle, including denial of this right to women and African-Americans. Recent obstacles to voting include voter-suppression tactics such as voter ID, long lines at polling places and an inadequate number of polling places. Voters’ rights can be supported by volunteering to educate and register people with the League of Women Voters, Indivisible or other local groups. Other non-partisan ways to support the right to vote include volunteering to work at the polls. Contact your county Board of Elections for information on being a precinct worker. Assuring an accurate census also means that representation across the country will be fair. Read more about the right to vote from a faith perspective in this article: “The Right To Vote and the Imago Dei Imperative” and the attached article, “Catholic Social Thought and Voting.”

UNCERTAIN FUTURE FOR DREAMERS
One of Mercy’s Critical Concerns states that we will “act in solidarity with migrants, immigrants, refugees and victims of human trafficking, seeking with them a more just and inclusive world.” Young immigrants, those who came to the United States as children and attended school here, face an uncertain future that could lead to their deportation to a country that is foreign to them even though they were born there. The U.S. Supreme Court has heard oral arguments on the legality of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and is expected to issue a ruling on DACA sometime between April and June 2020. If the Senate passes S. 874, the Dream Act of 2019 (already passed by the House), these young people will be protected, since this will codify into law protections for Dreamers. The U.S. Catholic bishops and most faith groups support this action. Read the attached talking points from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Fundraiser for bees down under

The HoneyBelles, a student club at Mount St. Mary Academy, maintains a bee-friendly garden and an educational hive on the campus in Little Rock, Arkansas. The club regularly holds fundraisers that help support bees and beekeepers, and its members share information about the importance of bees.

Most recently, the HoneyBelles became concerned about the plight of bees and beekeepers in Australia because of the drought and bushfires. They reached out to the New South Wales Apiarist Association to find out how they could help and were directed to the Hive Fund, a drought and fire relief campaign.

The HoneyBelles partnered with others in the Little Rock area, such as Walnut Valley Honey Co., to learn how to make lip balm from beeswax. Club members then made and sold lip balm for several weeks, raising $500 for Hive Aid, helping beekeepers seriously affected by the recent drought and bushfires in Australia.
Resources for Lent

BLOG SERIES
The Sisters of Mercy blog features reflections for Lent and Easter. The series began on Ash Wednesday and will include weekly reflections drawing on the Stations of the Cross. Click on the blue words to read the first three: Lenten blog

• Ash Wednesday—Sister Angelina Mitre (Caribbean, Central America, South America)
• Jesus is condemned to death—Mary Kate Masterson, Mercy Volunteer Corps
• Jesus takes up his cross—Sister Marie Michele Donnelly (Mid-Atlantic)

MEATLESS MONDAYS RETURN
Mercy Meatless Mondays, introduced during the Season of Creation last year, has returned for Lent with new recipes and resources.

In addition to abstaining from meat on Fridays during Lent as a spiritual practice, the Justice Team invites sisters, associates, companions, co-workers, students, volunteers and friends to add an extra day of meatless meals in recognition of the impact of meat production on Earth. Click on the blue words to view the Mercy Meatless Mondays guide.

MERCY MOMENT VIDEO
In the continuing Mercy Moments video series, Sister Danielle Gagnon (Mid-Atlantic) leads us in Lenten prayer. Click here: Video

Earth-centered retreat

A Spirituality and Care for Creation Retreat Day will be held Saturday March 21, 2020, at Mercy Administration Center in Belmont, North Carolina. Registration for the event, which is free, begins at 8:30 a.m., and the retreat continues until 3 p.m.

The presenter for the retreat is Dr. Catherine Wright, a theologian at Wingate University and author of a book titled Creation, God, and Humanity: Engaging the Mystery of Suffering Within the Sacred Cosmos.

The afternoon will focus on the theme “Everything is Connected.”

Click on the blue word for registration and more information: Retreat

A flyer is included with today’s attachments.

Retreats at convents

Several sisters have asked for information about retreats scheduled this year at the retirement convents in South Central. Many of them are already planned; however, some are not.

Today’s attachments include a list of the booked retreats, along with the person to contact for more information for each of them.

Oneness in tech

The Journey of Oneness Technology Team—combining the Journey of Oneness Implementation Team and technical support analysts from all Mercy geographic areas—met Thursday, February 20, 2020, in Belmont, North Carolina. They met to discuss key Journey of Oneness initiatives that relate to technology, including technical support and training. Here, Technology Training Manager Kristina Gaskins (standing) conducts a “Train the Trainer” session on Microsoft Teams with (from left) Rich Dinapoli, Sister Pat Lapczynski and Brian Kim.
Arkansas, to celebrate “Love of Community” and also to celebrate Sister Dorothy Calhoun as she begins her new journey/ministry at Catherine’s Residence in St. Louis, Missouri.

In addition to the regular meeting, sisters gathered in the chapel for a prayer service and blessing for Sister Dorothy, followed by a festive lunch in the dining room. And there was a special Valentine’s Day surprise: They were serenaded with the song “Let Me Call You Sweetheart” by Elvin Frick, a handsome 93-year-old friend of the sisters. The day ended with lots of fun, laughs and prizes.

Co-workers, guests and sisters from Catherine’s Residence gathered Monday, February 10, 2020, at Mercy Center in St. Louis, Missouri, to celebrate World Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Trafficking. The prayer service was led by Jennifer Reyes Lay, executive director of U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking. Here, South Central Ministry Office Director Jane Sprankel posts her reaction to the stories of victims next to a “Together Against Trafficking” word puzzle. Other participants followed with notes, symbolizing their commitment to help end this form of slavery.

Sisters of the Ozark-Ouachita LAC (from Barling, Little Rock, Fort Smith, Hot Springs, and Rogers, Arkansas; and Springfield, Missouri) give Sister Dorothy Calhoun the Irish Blessing as the prayer service ends.

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Ireland pilgrimage

Sister Claudia Ward is leading an Ireland Pilgrimage, September 10-19, 2020. The pilgrimage includes tours in Belfast, Derry, Donegal, Galway and Dublin. Travelers will visit the House of Mercy on Baggot Street and Catherine McAuley’s tomb, as well as many other sites that are significant in Mercy’s history. A flyer with more details and a reservation form is included with today’s attachments.

LAC celebrates

The Sisters of the Ozark-Ouachita Local Area Community (LAC) gathered Friday, February 14, 2020, at Catherine McAuley Convent in Barling, Arkansas, to celebrate “Love of Community” and also to celebrate Sister Dorothy Calhoun as she begins her new journey/ministry at Catherine’s Residence in St. Louis, Missouri.

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More Mercy

You’ll find additional news and information from the Sisters of Mercy in these publications:

- Mercy eNews, weekly online newsletter from Mercy International Association
- Investing in Mercy, monthly newsletter from Mercy Investment Services
- Mercy Now, biweekly newsletter from the Institute
- MESA Flash, weekly e-newsletter published by Mercy Education System of the Americas
- ¡Viva! Mercy, bimonthly magazine published by the Institute
Ministry opportunity

REGIONAL CHAPLAIN FOR OUTPATIENT SITES | ST. JOSEPH’S/CANDLER HEALTH SYSTEM, SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy, St. Joseph’s/Candler is the Savannah area’s only faith-based health system. In addition, SJ/C offers healthcare services across the entire continuum, including local and regional primary and specialty care, both inpatient and outpatient treatment.

This new position involves visiting selected off-site locations to provide spiritual care to patients and staff. The chaplain will visit ancillary locations where patients receive care on an outpatient basis for an extended time. The chaplain will provide pastoral care to patients, families and staff as needed.

A Sister of Mercy is preferred for this position. Other qualifications include an advanced degree in theology, divinity or related field and at least two units of clinical pastoral education. Application deadline is Friday, April 3, 2020.

For more information or to arrange a visit, contact Sister Margaret Beatty, mbeatty@mercysc.org / 912.819.3415.

Spring forward …

Most of the United States returns to daylight saving time on Sunday, March 8, 2020. Don’t forget to set your clocks ahead one hour before going to bed Saturday night.

Sister María Luisa Vera (left) and Sister Rosemary Welsh served as parade marshals during the WBCA Anheuser-Busch Washington’s Birthday Parade on Saturday, February 22, 2020, in Laredo, Texas. The parade is a highlight of the annual Washington’s Birthday Celebration, a monthlong festival in Laredo.

Parade marshals

Delivering comfort

Sister Olivia Obregon (center) and Sister Lalemont Pelikan deliver a blanket to a patient at Mercy Children’s Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri. The soft, colorful blankets were finished by sisters and volunteers at Catherine’s Residence in St. Louis. Each month, the sisters at the retirement convent find a service project and work on it together.

Delivering comfort

Parade marshals
Write, call, email ...

What’s going on in your area? We love receiving and sharing your news. Send your stories and photos to Beth Thompson, writer/communications strategist, at bthompson@mercysc.org by Friday, March 13 for publication in the next issue of CommunityeNews on Thursday, March 19, 2020. Thank you!

Today’s attachments

- Directory changes for March 5, 2020
- Catholic Social Thought and Voting
- DACA Talking Points
- Belmont retreat flyer
- List of convent retreats
- Ireland Pilgrimage flyer

(Above) Sisters at St. Bernardine Home in Fremont, Ohio, celebrated Mardi Gras on Tuesday evening, February 25, 2020, with food, games and prizes. Some 30 people attended, including Mercy associates and sisters from the Local Area Community. Above, wearing masks painted earlier, are (from left) Sisters Mary Jane Magers, Moira Kenny, Madelyn Marie Gordon and Joanne Mary Boellner. Right, Sister Mary Ann Brady paints a mask.

Sister Lauren Cole was the bingo caller for the Mardi Gras celebration at Mercy Convent in Nashville, Tennessee, on Tuesday, February 25, 2020. Sisters and associates gathered for Mass, drinks and dinner, followed by bingo.
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<tr>
<td>Gerety</td>
<td>Sr. Jane</td>
<td>Sister</td>
<td>Cell Phone</td>
<td>401.633.2889 *Correction Ministry Mercy Care Services *Correction 424 Decatur St. SE Atlanta, GA 30312-1848 Phone: 678.843.8505 Fax: 678.843.8501 Email: <a href="mailto:jane.gerety@mercyatlanta.org">jane.gerety@mercyatlanta.org</a> Title: Chief Mission Officer, Saint Joseph’s Health System</td>
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<td>Prucha</td>
<td>Sr. Sandra</td>
<td>Sister</td>
<td>Residence</td>
<td>Sisters of Mercy 412 Claymont Dr. Ballwin, MO 63011-2525 Ministry Sisters of Mercy 412 Claymont Dr. Ballwin, MO 63011-2525 Title: Discernment and Service in Mercy</td>
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<td>San Agustin</td>
<td>Sr. Doris</td>
<td>Sister</td>
<td>Residence</td>
<td>Mercy Heights Convent 211 Fr. San Vitores St. – Perezville Tamuning, GU 96913 Phone: 671.646.7246 Ministry Mercy Heights Convent 211 Fr. San Vitores St. – Perezville Tamuning, GU 96913 Title: Prayer and Works of Mercy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Serda</td>
<td>Sr. Joan</td>
<td>Sister</td>
<td>Residence</td>
<td>Convent of Mercy 101 Wimbledon Dr. Mobile, AL 36608-2321</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>Carol</td>
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<td>Address</td>
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<td>Moxley Carolyn</td>
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<td>Thompson Denise</td>
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Email updates to: ms2support@sistersofmercy.samanage.com
Current news about voter registration, voter suppression, gerrymandering, criminal justice reform, and foreign intrusion into U.S. elections call us to reflect on what Catholic social thought tells us about voting. As is often the case, considerations about voting begin with human dignity and the common good—the twin foundations of Catholic social thought.

The Second Vatican Council noted that the cultural, economic, and social evolution of peoples into the mid-twentieth century had resulted in profound changes in human institutions and how people related to one another. A key impact was on the political community "especially with regard to universal rights and duties both in the exercise of civil liberty and in the attainment of the common good..."\(^1\) While the Council did not prescribe a universal particular form of government, it made clear that "the political community exists for that common good in which the community finds its full justification and meaning..."\(^2\)

In spelling out that purpose, the council called for enhanced political participation in these words:

> It is in full accord with human nature that juridical political structures should, with ever better success and without any discrimination, afford all their citizens the chance to participate freely and actively in establishing the constitutional bases of a political community, governing the state, determining the scope and purpose of various institutions, and choosing leaders.

A declaration on the right and duty to vote followed in the next sentence:

> Hence let all citizens be mindful of their simultaneous right and duty to vote freely in the interest of advancing the common good.\(^3\)

There is both a right and a duty to vote which attaches to citizens in a participative political society such that it is "morally obligatory" to exercise the right to vote as an expression of our "co-responsibility for the common good..."\(^4\)

The Council goes on to underscore the universal requirement of a system of laws which protect the exercise of individual rights and the recognition of those rights and duties by all in society. This duty of government and law is an expression of the first element of the common good, namely, that "public authorities are bound to respect the fundamental and inalienable rights of the human person."\(^5\) Not only government, but also other citizens, have a reciprocal duty to respect one another's rights.\(^6\)

When considering questions of voting by persons who are incarcerated or suspension of voting rights after release, policymakers should be very hesitant to restrict the political rights of citizenship:

> They cannot be suspended by public authorities without legitimate and proportionate reasons. Political rights are meant to be exercised for the common good of the nation and the human community.\(^7\)

Similarly, insofar as the exercise of the right to vote is essential to the common good of any society, gerrymandering must be judged against the warning of the Council:

> Political parties should foster whatever they judge necessary for the common good. But they should never prefer their own advantage over this same common good.\(^8\)

Efforts to dilute the voting power of those of another party for the sake of one's own party, then, should be subjected to strict moral scrutiny in protecting both individual human dignity and the common good. Even more so, the efforts of one nation to undermine voting and elections within another nation should be condemned most severely.

**ENDNOTES**

2. Ibid., 74.
3. Ibid., 75.
4. Ibid., 75.
6. Ibid., 1907.
7. Catechism, 2237.
8. Gaudium et Spes, 75.
**Talking Points - January 2020**

**Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)**

---

**What is our message to Congress?**

Support legislation in the Senate, such as S.874, the Dream Act of 2019, which will protect individuals benefitting from the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, known as Dreamers, by providing a path to citizenship.

**Who are the DACA recipients and how many are there?**

DACA recipients (sometimes called Dreamers) are undocumented individuals who were brought to the U.S. as children by their parents. Under the DACA program started in 2012, about 660,880 undocumented applied for temporary relief from deportation and for the right to work.

**If the Dreamers are in the U.S. illegally, why should we protect them?**

DACA holders essentially grew up in the U.S. and many of them remember little, if anything, about where they were born. They are American in everything but immigration status. These young people attend colleges and universities with our own children or siblings, are required to pay taxes, serve honorably in our nation’s armed services and reserves, and worship with us in our parishes.

DACA recipients are among the most “extremely vetted” immigrants in the United States. The government knows they have not previously committed any felonies, knows where they live and work, how much they pay in taxes, and know if they leave the country and return. DACA recipients contribute to the economy and pay for DACA.

Many Americans are second or third generation immigrants, and many of us are first generation immigrants just like DACA recipients. For many Americans, our last name is a reminder of our immigrant and ethnic heritage.

**What is the status of legislation on DACA?**

On June 4, 2019, the House of Representatives passed HR 6, which provides critical permanent legal protection to DACA recipients and other populations in need of protection. If the Supreme Court ends the DACA program later this year and there is no legislation that has passed Congress, DACA youth will face an uncertain future and maybe even deportation and family separation. It is thus imperative that the Senate finds a bipartisan legislative solution to protect DACA recipients that provides a path to citizenship, such as S.874, the Dream Act of 2019.

**What does the Church and Catholic teaching say about Dreamers?**

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has long supported Dreamers, and we continue to urge Congress to work with all deliberate speed towards a bipartisan legislative solution that includes a path to citizenship for these youth.

As Catholics, we are taught to care for the foreigner: “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me.” (Mt 25:35). These are our obligations as a Christian people – to care for our neighbor. Let’s remember and live by the teaching in Leviticus 19:34: *The foreigner living with you must be treated as one of your native born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt.*
Spirituality and Care for Creation Retreat Day

Saturday March 21, 8:30 am - Registration 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Place:
Sisters of Mercy, Curtin Hall, 101 Mercy Drive Belmont, NC 28012

We are honored to have as our presenter Dr. Catherine Wright, a theologian at Wingate, Saint Matthews Parishioner, and author of a book titled: Creation, God, and Humanity: Engaging the Mystery of Suffering Within the Sacred Cosmos. She is an engaging dynamic speaker.

The afternoon will be centered around the theme: Everything is Connected.
Pope Francis in Laudato Si' states: “everything is interconnected, and that genuine care for our own lives and our relationships with nature is inseparable from fraternity, justice and faithfulness to others.”

Optional Session for Parish Care for Creation Teams: from 3:30 – 4:30 pm
An opportunity to informally share with each other.

About our presenter: Catherine Wright, Wingate University, Religion and Philosophy, Faculty Member

Catherine Wright, Hons. B.Sc, B. Ed, M.Div  PhD in Christian Ethics and Ecotheology
Dr. Wright engages contemporary ethical issues via the intertwining lenses of ecology and theology, Currently she is teaching Global Perspectives in Ethics, Systematic Theology, Religion and Science, and Theological Responses to Our Ecological Crisis for Wingate University, NC.

No charge for this conference.
Some limited housing available for out of town attendees
Registration link here:  Spirituality and Care for Creation Retreat Day

Questions: Sister Rose Marie Tresp, rtresp@mercysc.org, 956-324-7057
# Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
## South Central
### Retirement Convent Retreats - 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Convent</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Retreat Dates</th>
<th>Presenter and/or Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mercy Springwell</td>
<td>Baltimore, MD</td>
<td>To be Determined</td>
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<td>Sr. Elaine Sebera <a href="mailto:esebera@mercysc.org">esebera@mercysc.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Catherine McAuley Convent</td>
<td>Barling, AK</td>
<td>July 9 – 24</td>
<td>Sr. Katherine Doyle, RSM</td>
<td>Debra Allen <a href="mailto:dallen@mercysc.org">dallen@mercysc.org</a></td>
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<td>Sacred Heart Convent</td>
<td>Belmont, NC</td>
<td>To be Determined (Limited space)</td>
<td>To be Determined</td>
<td>Sr. Mary Hugh Mauldin <a href="mailto:mmauldin@mercysc.org">mmauldin@mercysc.org</a></td>
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<td>McAuley Convent</td>
<td>Cincinnati, OH</td>
<td>July 13 – 17</td>
<td>Fr. Len Fecko “Meeting God Halfway”</td>
<td>Sr. Judy Gradel <a href="mailto:jgradel@mercysc.org">jgradel@mercysc.org</a></td>
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<td>St. Bernardine Home</td>
<td>Fremont, OH</td>
<td>November 9 – 13</td>
<td>Sr. Mary Pat Garvin, RSM “Affectionately Yours” based on the letters of Catherine McAuley</td>
<td>Rhonda Wolpert <a href="mailto:rwolpert@mercysc.org">rwolpert@mercysc.org</a></td>
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<td>Convent of Mercy</td>
<td>Mobile, AL</td>
<td>September 17 – 24 (Limited space)</td>
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<td>Sr. Deborah Kennedy <a href="mailto:dkennedy@mercysc.org">dkennedy@mercysc.org</a></td>
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<td>Mercy Convent</td>
<td>Nashville, TN</td>
<td>July 19 – 25</td>
<td>Sr. Michele Marie Donnelly, RSM</td>
<td>Sr. Beth Higgins <a href="mailto:bhiggins@mercysc.org">bhiggins@mercysc.org</a></td>
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<td>Maureen Shumard <a href="mailto:mshumard@mercysc.org">mshumard@mercysc.org</a></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Catherine’s Residence</td>
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<td>September 13 – 19</td>
<td>Sr. Katherine Doyle, RSM</td>
<td>Sr. Monica Knipfer</td>
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<td>Mercy Health Center Convent</td>
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<td>Peggy Lindgren</td>
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Ireland Pilgrimage - September 10-19, 2020
with Sister Claudia Ward, RSM
$3,867 per person double occupancy

What’s included in the Pilgrimage:

- Round trip airfare from St. Louis
- 8 nights superior tourist class hotels
- Daily Irish Breakfast and dinners (with tea/coffee)
- Entrance fees and transfers
- Touring as indicated in the itinerary (please see itinerary below)
- Baggage handling at all hotels (1 bag per person)
- Gratuities
- Services of a Professional English-speaking Tour Guide & Driver in a Modern Motor Coach

Itinerary:

Day 1: Depart Thursday, September 10, 2020 for Ireland

Day 2: Friday, September 11

Upon arrival at Dublin Airport, meet with your driver & guide and board your modern motor coach. **Transfer to Belfast.**

Upon arrival, enjoy a Panoramic City Tour of Belfast – an excellent way to discover Belfast City. The tour will take in the leaning Albert Memorial Clock tower (Ireland’s answer to the Tower of Pisa) and the Opera House, which is one of Belfast’s great landmarks. Your tour will pass by the City Hall, the Opera house, The Crown Bar (dates from 1885), Queens University and the Botanic Gardens.

Visit Titanic Museum - Located in the heart of Belfast, the Titanic Belfast recreates the story of the world’s most famous ship in an iconic, six floor building right beside the historic site of the original ship’s construction. Opened in April 2012 to coincide with the centenary of its launch, the self-guided journey begins on entering the building’s giant atrium, where the visitor is surrounded by the four ‘ship’s hull’ shaped wings which house the Titanic Experience. As you journey through the nine large galleries of the interactive exhibition, you will uncover the true story of the Titanic, from her conception in Belfast in the early 1900’s, through her construction and launch, to her famous maiden voyage and subsequent place in history. Some tours will take in a visit to the Harland and Wolfe Shipyards, where the Titanic was built and launched in 1912.

**Belfast Murals** - Throughout the 20th century, Northern Ireland has had a complicated political history. While the region is vibrant and peaceful today, just over 40 years ago, Belfast was a city in civil war; known as the troubles. To learn more about this period of history, we will wander along some of the streets to take in the sights of colourful murals depicting this time.

Our final stop, for a short visit will be at Ballymurphy and Corpus Christ Church, where St. Mother Teresa worked alongside four other nuns from her Missionaries of Charity order during the 1970s. Overnight at: **Holiday Inn in Sandy Row, Belfast**
Day 3: Saturday, September 12 – Leave Belfast and travel to Londonderry (Derry)

Visit the Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge - Carrick-a-Rede, on the Antrim Coast, is a spectacular rope bridge, which spans a chasm, 30 meters deep and 20 meters wide. Originally a seasonal working bridge for fishermen, it connects a small island to the mainland. Its construction once consisted of a single rope handrail and widely spaced slats, which the fishermen would cross to bring ashore salmon caught off the island. The single handrail was subsequently replaced by today’s two-handed railed bridge. Visitors bold enough to cross to the rocky island are rewarded with fantastic views. Underneath the bridge are large caves, which often served as a safe haven for fishing trawlers escaping from winter storms.

Continue to the Giants Causeway - Encounter Northern Ireland’s favorite giant Finn McCool at the new Giants Causeway Visitor Centre on the North Antrim coast which opened in the summer of 2012. According to legend Finn McCool created the Giants Causeway by building stepping stones to Scotland to challenge the Scottish giant Benandonner! The new Visitor Centre explores the major themes of mythology, geology, landscape, ecology, culture and social history based on the UNESCO World Heritage site that consists of 40,000 basalt polygonal columns formed 60 million years ago after a volcanic eruption. There are various interactive exhibits and short video presentations within five designated interpretive exhibition areas and the self-guided visit will culminate with a spectacular two minutes audio-visual projection of a volcanic eruption flowing over the walls and onto the floor. Other services and facilities include a large craft and souvenir shop, Tourist Information and restaurant. To enhance the wider visitor experience around the site, a hand held audio guide is available in a range of languages which will bring the wider World Heritage Site to life and inform visitors of unique features to look out for across this amazing landscape. Guided tours of the site are also available. The walks and trails around the World Heritage Site have been upgraded, with the addition of a new accessible cliff top walk for families and people with disabilities. The Conde Nast Traveler magazine, in 2015, included hopping the stones of the Giant’s Causeway as one of the '50 things to do in Europe before you die'.

Journey to Derry and enjoy a photo stop at Dunluce Castle before checking into our hotel. Overnight at: Best Western Plus Whitehorse Hotel, Derry

Day 4: Sunday, September 13
This morning enjoy a public Mass at St. Columba’s Church and visit Sr. Mary Anne Doyle’s Grave (and other Sisters of Mercy) on the grounds of St. Columba’s Church. If open for visitors, we will make our way to Pump Street, near St. Columb’s Cathedral to visit the former Mercy Convent, which has recently been renovated into a Family Justice Centre, operated by the Foyle Women’s Aid.

After lunch we will depart for Donegal. En-route we will visit the Stone Fort of Grianán of Aileach, which sits on a hilltop overlooking Inishowen County Donegal. It is 250 meters above sea level, the stone fort was probably first built on an earthen rath. The origins of the Grianán of Aileach fort are dated back to 1700 BC. It is linked to the Tuatha de Danann who invaded Ireland before the Celts and built
stone forts on top of strategic hills. The round fort is built largely without mortar. The dry stonewalls contain two passages within them as well as terraces along their interior which would have allowed access to their summit.

Overnight at: Mount Errigal Hotel in Donegal

Leave for Glenveagh National Park – A spectacular 16,500 hectares (40,000 acres) of scenic mountains, lakes, glens and woods, with a herd of red deer, Glenveagh is one of Ireland's protected natural parks managed by the State. A Scottish style castle within the estate is surrounded by one of the finest gardens in Ireland, which contrast with the rugged surroundings. The Visitor Centre houses exhibitions and an audio-visual show on the area. The Visitor Centre is accessible for visitors with disabilities and has a cafe / restaurant. A return shuttle minibus service is available to bring clients from the Visitor Centre to the area of the castle and the gardens.

Continue to Slieve League (Sliabh Liag) Cliffs - Europe’s highest sea cliffs, although less famous than the Cliffs of Moher in County Clare, Slieve League's Cliffs reach almost three times higher, but you won’t really notice. The site is largely untouched by tourism and walks through a largely unspoiled landscape giving visitors a spectacular view of the coast and the cliff face. To enter, you need to open a farm gate and more important you need to close it after yourself as sheep roam freely throughout this area. Donegal Bay can be clearly seen as you walk towards the terrifyingly high top of Slieve League and there is a small lake at eye level. A short walk will take you to the right of the amazing cliff face of Bunglas (which literally means end of the cliff).

Our final stop, before checking into our hotel in Sligo (if time permits) is a quick photo stop at W.B. Yeats’ Grave in Drumcliffe. Overnight at Sligo Southern Hotel, Sligo

Day 6: Tuesday, September 15
Leave Sligo and visit Our Lady of Knock Shrine - Knock Shrine, located in Co. Mayo is Ireland's National Marian Shrine where over 1.5 million pilgrims visit each year. It was here on August 21, 1879 that local people witnessed the manifestation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph and Saint John The Evangelist. If time permits, we will journey to Kylemore Abbey - Kylemore Abbey (a fairy tale-like castle) is stunningly located in the Kylemore Pass in Connemara. Mitchell Henry built the House in 1868, after having spent his honeymoon in the area. The architecture is best described as neo-gothic and the house still displays all the characteristics of that period. One of Kylemore Abbey's most famous features is its miniature cathedral, built in 1870 and known locally as the Gothic church. Today, the abbey is home to the Irish order of Benedictine nuns. They established a private school for young girls, which was the renowned Kylemore Abbey International School. The school eventually closed in 2010.
Continue to Galway and check into your hotel. Over dinner, enjoy a visit with Sr. Bernadette Marie, RSM who is the director of the Charleville Convent & Heritage Center, to learn more about our Sisters’ involvement in the Crimea War. Overnight at Connacht Hotel, Galway.

**Day 7: Wednesday, September 16**
This morning we will journey to Dublin. Enjoy a Panoramic Tour of Dublin City. Here you will discover the north and south side of the River Liffey. This area offers great striking monuments such as the GPO (General Post Office) on the city main thoroughfare, O’Connell Street, or the Custom House along the quays, as well as the Phoenix Park, the largest public park in Europe. The south side appears more sophisticated with its vast Georgian squares, such as Merrion Square, where Oscar Wilde’s House can still be found (today owned by an American College), its colorful doors, along with Grafton Street and its quality shops. Not so far from St. Stephen’s Green, in Kildare St., you will see the house of Bram Stoker, the author of Dracula. This part of the city is also dominated by the students of Trinity College, where the famous book of Kells is permanently exhibited in its library. The university is facing the medieval district where Dublin Castle and the two Anglican Cathedrals can be found.

After lunch, we will visit with Sisters at Coolock House – Walk in the footsteps where Catherine McAuley lived with the Callaghan family; inheriting the estate and using the fortune to build House of Mercy on Baggot Street (a refuge and education center for women and children) which opened on September 24, 1827.

Visit former Presentation Convent Chapel on George’s Hill, where Catherine McAuley, Anna Maria Doyle, and Elizabeth Harley made their novitiate and professed their religious vows on December 12, 1831 as the first Sisters of Mercy, founding the congregation of the Sisters of Mercy. Overnight at Jury’s Christchurch, Dublin.

**Day 8: Thursday, September 17**
This morning visit Trinity College & Book of Kells - Trinity was founded in 1592 by Queen Elizabeth 1st on grounds confiscated from an Augustinian priory and is the oldest university in Ireland. The Campanile, erected in 1852, was built on what is believed to be the center of the monastery. Built to further the education of the ruling Anglo-Irish families, restrictions were imposed to prevent Catholic from attending courses. These restrictions were not fully lifted until the 1970’s. Trinity however admitted women in 1902, earlier than most British universities. Most of the main buildings off the main square were built during the Georgian period, some of which replaced older buildings. Within its walls, visitors will be able to admire Parliament Square and its 18th Century edifices. Trinity College has had many famous students such as Jonathan Swift and Samuel Beckett who later became a lecturer in French at the university. The college houses Ireland’s largest collection of illuminated manuscripts of the Gospels in the Book of Kells.

Celebrate public Mass at St. Teresa’s Carmelite Church, where the first 13 Sisters of Mercy are buried. If possible, we will go to the crypt underneath the altar to the Sister’s burial site.
Visit **House of Mercy on Baggot Street** and tomb of Venerable Catherine McAuley. As we visit, the International Centre for the Sisters of Mercy, we honor all who have followed Catherine McAuley. Here we will reflect on the many years of tremendous contributions to society and in whose footsteps we walk today. Enjoy typical tea and scones.

If time allows, drive by Mater Hospital, founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1852 and then a possible visit at **St. Mary's Pro Cathedral** – built between 1815 and 1825 on the site of a 12th-century Cistercian abbey of St. Mary. St. Mary's is not an official Cathedral, even though it functions as one. St. Mary's functions as the main Catholic Parish Church of the City Centre in Dublin. The Cathedral is in the Neo-Classic Doric style, which provides a distinct contrast to the Gothic Revival look of most other churches of the period. The exterior portico is modelled on the Temple of Theseus in Athens, with six Doric columns, while the Renaissance-style interior is patterned after the Church of St. Philip de Reule of Paris.

Return back to your hotel.

**Day 9: Friday, September 18**

Leave for **Dún Laoghaire or Booterstown** to visit with Sisters of Mercy at their convalescent Convent.

Return back to your hotel and enjoy a free afternoon. Enjoy our Farewell Dinner and last ‘good cup of tea’ before packing and preparing for our travels home.

**Day 10: Saturday, September 19** –

**Return to US** Travel to Dublin Airport today to start your journey home.

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**NOTES from Travel Agency**

- Please note we have not checked availability of any services or hotels at this time - all services and prices will be subject to availability at time of definite booking.
- Check-in to hotels may not be possible before 15h00 on the day of arrival.
- Tips for drivers and guides are not included in the quote and may want to be considered by the client.
- No evening return transfers are included in the package price at this time. If any additional evening return transfers are required, a supplement of EUR 350.00 per coach per evening will apply.
- Price for evening return transfer as given is valid for evening movements pre-booked before the group’s arrival in Ireland through Abbey Ireland & UK. In the case of evening movements that are not pre-booked prior to the group’s arrival in Ireland, the quoted price will not be valid and the price is subject to individual agreement between the tour leader of the group/coach driver and Abbey Ireland & UK tour-guide. Abbey Ireland & UK cannot bear any responsibility for such individual agreements made.
- All prices quoted for options apply only where options are pre-booked before group's arrival by Abbey Ireland & UK. Abbey Ireland & UK will invoice you for same. Prices apply with minimum 15 participants per option. One free place included.
Enrollment Form
10 Day Ireland Pilgrimage (September 10-19, 2020)
with Sister Claudia Ward, RSM

TOUR COST: $3867.00 per Person Sharing
(Land, Air, Fuel Surcharge & Taxes Included)
Single Supplement: $499.00

Deposit & Payments:
$500.00 Deposit per Person Due Immediately
(Plus travel insurance if chosen. Non-refundable)
Final Payment due by: June 15, 2020

Please Print

RESERVATION APPLICATION

*Please Note: Air taxes and fuel surcharges are included, based on time group air was originally reserved. Air taxes and fuel surcharges are subject to change until group air is ticketed. All groups are ticketed at the same time, and early ticketing is not permitted.

Your signature is required acknowledging you have read and accept this. A reservation cannot be made without a signature:

Please sign here: ____________________________________________

Please reserve ______ seat(s) on Sister Claudia’s “Ireland Pilgrimage Tour” September 10-19, 2020 with A & R Block Travel

Name (as on passport): ___________________________ Passport # __________ Passport Exp. __________

Address: _____________________________________________ (Street) ___________________________ (City) ___________________________ (State) __________ (Zip) __________

Date of Birth: ___________________________ Phone: (Home) ___________________________ (Work) ___________________________

Email: _____________________________________________

ROOM TYPE: ______ Twin/Double ______ Triple
______ Single Supplement (Rooms are limited)

FREQUENT FLYER #: _____________________________________________

GLOBAL ENTRY #: _____________________________________________ If you are NOT taking Travel Insurance, Please initial ________

 Optional Travel Protection Plan is highly recommended:
Can be purchased up until final payment & NON-REFUNDABLE
Travel insurance price is based on the FINAL TOTAL TRIP COST
Cost of insurance (see brochure) ______ YES ______ NO

FURTHER INQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT: Joyce Lipkind (A & R Block Travel) Ph: (314) 576-1700 Email: joycel@arblocktravel.com or Sister Claudia Ward, RSM at (314) 633-8517 Email: Claudia.Ward@mercy.net

Please make checks payable to: A & R Block c/o Joyce Lipkind; Send to: 12312 Olive Blvd. Ste. 125, ST. LOUIS, MO 63141-5449

Deposit of $ ___________________________ is enclosed. (Plus optional insurance, if chosen, non-refundable)

NO CREDIT CARDS – CHECKS ONLY - DEPOSITS ARE NONREFUNDABLE

Pilgrimage Includes:

- Round trip airfare from St. Louis
- 8 nights superior tourist class hotels
- Daily Irish Breakfast and dinners (with tea/coffee)
- Entrance fees and transfers
- Touring as indicated in the itinerary (please see itinerary for more information)
- Baggage handling at all hotels (1 bag per person)
- Gratuities
- Services of a Professional English-speaking Tour Guide and Driver in a Modern Motor Coach

- Check-in to hotels may not be possible before 15h00 on the day of arrival.
- Prices apply with minimum of 15 participants.