These days our Leadership Team is focused on the many aspects of Mercy’s Journey of Oneness. From our place on the journey, we consider this Sunday’s scriptures:

*Share* your bread with the hungry,

*sponsor* the oppressed and the homeless;

clothe the naked when you see them,

and do not turn your back on your own. (Is. 58:7)

*then light shall rise for you in the darkness,*

and the gloom shall become for you like midday. (Is 58:10)

*The just one is a light in darkness...* (Ps. 112)

... whoever follows me will have the light of life. (Jn. 8:12)

... your light must shine before others... (Matt. 5:16)

In these words, we hear an invitation, a reminder and an implicit warning.

We are so aware of the darkness in our 2020 world. So aware of our personal, local and global yearning for light. Speaking to our yearnings, we hear the invitation: Share, shelter, clothe, and do not turn your back. And the reminder: This is the source of THE light, who is Jesus. The warning: THIS, and this alone, will illuminate our world.

Let us continue to pray for one another on the journey as we depend on this promise of light in the darkness and as we seek, in oneness, to share, shelter, clothe and respond!

*Debbie*  *Mary Rose*  *Pat*  *Jane*
Justice update

U.S.-STYLE APARTHEID
Segregated neighborhoods are still characteristic of every city in the United States. And segregated housing means segregated schools, which produce large academic gaps between white and African American children. Our national myth says residential segregation results from private discrimination or personal choices that do not violate constitutional rights. However, residential segregation was created by racially explicit and unconstitutional government policy in the mid-20th century, including the racially explicit federal subsidization of whites-only suburbs. The U.S. government purposefully placed public housing in high-poverty, racially isolated neighborhoods to concentrate the black population and, with explicit racial intent, created a whites-only mortgage guarantee program to shift the white population from urban neighborhoods to exclusively white suburbs. The result today is that white households are worth at least 10 times as much as African American households. African American families making $100,000 typically live in the kinds of neighborhoods inhabited by white families making $30,000. Watch this 10-minute video: Forgotten history; or read: Racist housing policies

CENSUS 2020
A fair, accurate census is one of the most significant civil rights and economic justice issues facing the U.S. today. In past censuses, millions of children, people of color, low-income people and immigrants have gone uncounted. This perpetuates systemic racism, undermines state political representation to Congress and underfunds resources we all use, such as emergency response, hospitals, job-training centers, schools, senior centers, nutrition assistance programs, bridges, tunnels and other public works projects for the next 10 years. An accurate count is a moral necessity. The information gathered in the census is confidential and can be used only for statistical purposes. The Constitution requires that a census be conducted every 10 years of every U.S. resident, whether a citizen or not, and the 2020 census form will not include a question about citizenship. Click the blue words to read more: Faith in Public Life and U.S. Census Bureau

Care for Creation
A group of sisters and Mercy associates in Cincinnati, Ohio, have formed a Care for Creation network in response to the climate crisis. Members have pledged “to walk lightly on the Earth mindful that our current American lifestyle is unsustainable. We will pray, learn and advocate for living in balance so that all God’s creatures can thrive.”

Members of the network have pledged to recycle, compost, pick up litter, eliminate single-use plastic and paper, return packing material to UPS for reuse, refuse plastic straws at restaurants, lower their thermostats, educate students, keep batteries for proper disposal, use environmentally friendly products (such as vinegar instead of chemicals to kill weeds and unclog drains), and allow leaves to remain in many areas to encourage habitat for some insects.

For several years, Mercy Associate Deanna Dutro has collected bottle caps, which are converted to plastic picnic tables and benches.
Parade marshals

Sister María Luisa Vera and Sister Rosemary Welsh have been named parade marshals for two major events in the Washington’s Birthday Celebration in Laredo, Texas. They will lead the IBC Youth Parade Under the Stars on Thursday evening, February 20, 2020, and the Anheuser-Busch Washington’s Birthday Parade on Saturday morning, February 22, 2020. Sharing the honor at the IBC Youth Parade with them will be Texas State Rep. Tracy King.

On Mercy Day 2019, the Sisters of Mercy celebrated 125 years of continuous ministry in Laredo.

The Washington’s Birthday Celebration, celebrated for more than 100 years, is Laredo’s biggest festival. It has expanded to more than a month of events, including parades, pageants, fireworks, a carnival, an air show and much more, drawing more than a half million residents and visitors. To read more about the festival in the Laredo Morning Times, including interviews with Sisters María Luisa and Sister Rosemary, click here: Laredo celebration

Mercy Moment video

In the “Mercy Moment” video for January, Sister Barbara MacWilliams, RSM (Mid-Atlantic), offers a reflection and prayer for National Catholic Schools Week (January 26 – February 1).

Sister Barbara is a reading enrichment specialist at Waldron Mercy Academy in Merion Station, Pennsylvania. Click here to watch the video: Mercy Moment

‘Convent Crawl’

A group of young women, ages 16 to 35, gathered Saturday, January 25, 2020, for the 2020 Savannah Convent Crawl to learn about the charism and ministries of six religious communities in Savannah, Georgia. Participants enjoyed snacks, appetizers, dinner and dessert at the various locations. At each stop, they heard sisters’ vocation stories and shared prayer time in the convent chapels before departing. Above, the progressive dinner begins with appetizers at Mercy Convent.

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

Sister Presence, St. Mary’s Health Care System, Athens, Georgia

St. Mary’s Health Care System has an opportunity for a religious sister to support patients with prayer before surgery, to serve as a Eucharistic minister to patients, oversee the hospital chapel, and coordinate one monthly Mass at the hospital and one at a senior living community. In addition, occasional visits to smaller hospitals in Lavonia and Greensboro, Georgia, to provide a sister presence would be expected.

This role also might expand to include participation in planning and conducting formation activities and spirituality in the workplace as the sister’s interest and availability permit.

This ministry could be fulfilled by one sister, or perhaps two sisters who wish to share in it together.

If interested, contact Julie Carter, vice president of Mission Services, no later than Sunday, March 1, 2020, at Julie.carter@stmarysathens.org or 706.389.3428.

Lenten booklets

The Institute is purchasing electronic copies of Pax Christi’s Lenten prayer booklet, “Fasting Towards Freedom,” for all Sisters of Mercy this year—available in English and Spanish versions. The booklet will be sent out by email the week of February 17.

In this booklet, Sister Rose Marie Tresp starts off the reflections with a question: “As we enter into the Lenten 2020 season, a time of uncertainty in our world and country, we ask ourselves: What does it mean to be a disciple, a follower of the Gospel and the person of Jesus Christ?”

Associates and companions are encouraged to purchase their own copies of the booklet ($4 each) directly from Pax Christi. Click here for information on ordering print or electronic copies: Booklet orders

Sisters of Mercy celebrating Jubilees in the Diocese of Charlotte, North Carolina, were honored on World Day for Consecrated Life—Saturday, February 1, 2020—with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Peter Jugis at the Cathedral of St. Patrick in Charlotte. Among those honored were (pictured from left with the bishop): Sisters Mary Robert Williams and Maria Goretti Weldon, each celebrating 70 years of religious profession; and Sister Mary Schmuck, celebrating 60 years. A luncheon followed Mass.

Photo by SueAnn Howell, Catholic News Herald
More than $595,000 was raised for Mercy Health Foundation at the Mercy Gala at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, on January 17, 2020. The funds help sustain Mercy’s ministry and support enhancements for women and infants served. Among those attending the Gala were (from left) Sisters Diane Koorie, Claudia Ward, Rose Power—who was honored on her 90th birthday that day—and Sister Donald Mary Lynch.

Photo by Simon Hurst

Today’s attachments

• Directory changes for February 6, 2020
• Extended obituary for Sister Valentina Sheridan

Send us your news

The next issue of Community eNews will be published Thursday, February 20, 2020. Send your news and photos to Beth Thompson, writer/communications strategist, at bthompson@mercysc.org by Friday, February 14. Thank you!
## South Central Directory Updates

### February 6, 2020

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| Heizer    | Sr. Elizabeth Ann | Sister  | Residence | McAuley Convent  
1768 Cedar Ave  
Cincinnati, OH 45224-2802  
Ministry  
Catholic Charities Southwest Ohio  
(Immigration Legal Services)  
7162 Reading Rd. Suite 700  
Cincinnati, OH 45237-3844  
Phone: 513.241.4333  
Email: eheizer@ccswoc.org  
Title: DOJ Accredited Representative |
| Stoutz     | Sr. Carolyn   | Sister  | Residence | Sisters of Mercy  
1411 Chickasaw Blvd.  
Ardmore, OK 73401-1827 |
| Denekas    | Elizabeth     | New Associate | Email | elizabethdenekas@gmail.com |
|           |               |         | Cell Phone | 808.208.0451 |
|           |               |         | Address | 201 Berryman Rd. Apt 97  
Vicksburg, MS 39180-4412 |
| Harrison   | Kathryn       | Associate | Address | 2010 South Ridgewood Ave #32  
Edgewater, FL 32141-4207 |
| McCoy      | Ruthie        | New Associate | Email | Ruthiemccoy07@bellsouth.net |
|           |               |         | Cell Phone | 601.927.6805 |
|           |               |         | Address | 700 Adams St.  
Vicksburg, MS 39183-2112  
Phone: 601.636.3347 |
| Roman      | Alexandria    | Associate | Address | 150 Oak Ridge Place Apt 7N  
Greenville, SC 29615-6601 |
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<tr>
<td>Russell</td>
<td>Mae</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jimaeruss@carolina.rr.com">jimaeruss@carolina.rr.com</a></td>
<td>P.O. Box 532, Mount Pleasant, NC 28124-0532</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>Tammy</td>
<td></td>
<td>1702 City Dweller Way, Knoxville, TN 37921-5246</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Email updates to: ms2support@sistersofmercy.samanage.com*
Will we all meet in heaven?  
Oh what joy even to think of it.

Catherine McAuley

Born in Macon, Georgia, to Valentino and Theresa Cassidy Sheridan, Sister Valentina Sheridan was preceded in death by her parents and her brothers: Valentino, Richard and Donal.

Sister Valentina attended St. Joseph’s Elementary School and Mount de Sales Academy, both Sisters of Mercy schools in Macon. She graduated from Mount St. Agnes College in 1957 and later attended the University of Dayton.

Sister Valentina entered the Novitiate of the Sisters of Mercy on September 8, 1949. She attributed her religious calling to her grandfather “Poppa,” who would take her to daily Mass in Macon, then go and visit the sick afterward. She would recall: “He had such a lovely way of speaking to people. He was my inspiration for religious life.”
After taking perpetual vows on August 16, 1955, Sister “Val” ministered as an elementary school teacher at various schools in Baltimore, Maryland, and Macon and then went on to become an elementary school principal in Augusta and Atlanta, Georgia. From this jumping-off point in 1974, Sister Val took on the responsibility of being the superintendent of elementary education for the Archdiocese of Atlanta. Her magnetic personality and gracious smile endeared her to all she met. She loved working with diverse groups as the position required and soon felt a calling to take her vocation to another avenue.

In 1980, Sister Val took on a new ministry as the pastoral assistant at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Roswell, Georgia. She loved being with the members of the parish in their joys and sorrows. In 1987, she served as pastoral associate at Sacred Heart Parish in Atlanta and later became the parish administrator. These parishioners were faithful to her and often traveled to Mercy Convent in Savannah, Georgia, to visit with Sister Val years later.

Considering these wonderful experiences, she took a further path for her religious life. She went to the Franciscan Health System in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to become a hospital chaplain. From there Sister Val became a fixture in pastoral care at St. Joseph’s Hospital in Atlanta (now Emory St. Joseph’s Hospital), serving from 1995 to 2015. She walked the halls and was a messenger of light, consolation and hope.

Sister Val, being tall and regal, with a warm smile, was welcomed in by staff and patients alike. She would offer a prayer, a joke or a smile—whatever was needed. She had a special knack for knowing what was needed, not unlike her “Papa” those many years earlier. Her infectious laugh and warm wit endeared her to all, and she met many people from all walks of life, including the late Mother Teresa.

Sister Val retired from full-time pastoral care at Emory St. Joseph’s Hospital in 2015 and moved to Mercy Convent in Savannah. She ministered part-time in pastoral care at St. Joseph’s/Candler Health System before permanently retiring in 2017.

Upon Sister Val’s retirement, Wilton Gregory, archbishop of Atlanta, wrote to her: “God has blessed you with a superb vocation, spanning the whole spectrum of Church life—religious life, community life, education, administration, health and human services—you have grown in the Lord, to ultimately exercise a gentle but firm authority, put in you by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and well-tempered by the gentle love and outpouring generosity of the same Jesus Christ.”

**Funeral Mass:** January 17, 2020, at St. Frances Cabrini Church, Savannah

**Interment:** Riverside Cemetery in Macon, Georgia