

One Mercy Education System

To Hold in Trust

August 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Shared Vision 3

Within the Tradition of Catherine McAuley 4–7

Founded on Trust 8–9

A Profile of the Journey 10

Focus of Communications 11

Shared Assumptions of the ILC 12–15

Context and Language 16

Key Context – Constitutions 17

Institute Leadership Conference 18

ILT and Institute Chapter 19

Community 20

October 2014 – ILC Affirmation 21

Public Juridic Person 22

Catholic Schools 23

March 15, 2016 – ILC Ratification 24

Governance 24

Membership Corporation 25

Reserved Powers of the ILT for MESA, Inc. 26

Board of Directors for MESA, Inc. 27

Reserved Powers of the MESA Board for Each

Sponsored School 28

Co-sponsored and Country Designated

Structures 29

Affiliate schools and Educational Ministries 29

Shared Mission 30–31

Board of Trustees/Directors – School 30

Chief Administrator – School 30

School and Extended Community 31

Covenant and Covenant Document 32

Principles of Governance 33

Collegial Processes and Task Force Intro 34

Task Force – Mercy Education Governance 35

Task Force – Mercy Education Leadership

Formation 35

Task Force – Mercy Charism Standards/

Accreditation 35

Task Force – Mercy Education Financial/

Sustainability (of the System) 36

Task Force – Mercy Education Innovation and

New Initiatives 36

Task Force – Mercy Education Programs and

Services 37

Task Force – Mercy Education International 37

Significant Dates 38

Upon Reflection 39

Continuous Conversion 40

Openness to Change 41

Affirmation for the Future 42

Walking Together in Mercy 43

Resource Links 44

Resource 45

Hurrah for Foundations 46

Prepared in Service 47–48

Shared Vision

"Let us together in a spirit of mutual collaboration, love of Mercy, and hope for the future bring together one Mercy education system, belonging to one Institute, marked by fidelity to the charism of one foundress, Catherine McAuley, committed to the gospel and in service to the Church. For the journey we ask Catherine's blessing.

December 12, 2014
The Institute Leadership Conference

We Recall

"we have ever confided largely in the Divine Providence – and shall continue to do so."

Catherine McAuley



September 24, 1841 from
Catherine McAuley at Baggot
Street to Sister Mary Ann Doyle
in Tullamore

When Catherine McAuley writes her words of trust to Mary Ann Doyle, they come at the end of a letter asking Mary Ann for assistance with the placement of a Sister. The letter is also written responding to a need, the guardianship of the convent.

It further clarifies the scarcity of funds at the House of Mercy on Baggot Street, recalling they are confiding in Divine Providence....

This moment in time

Placement, need, funds, structures to support the continuance of the mission - these are all issues understood and embraced as challenges to meet with confidence.

We Remember

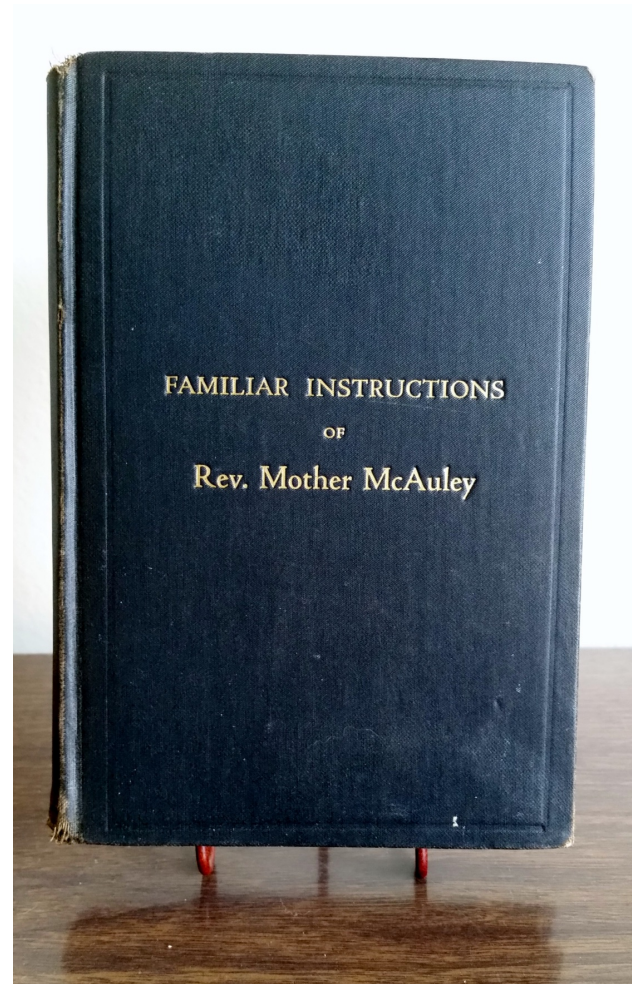


Catherine's letter written September 24, 1841, 10 years from the founding of the congregation, showed her deep care for her sisters, her provision for ministry and her attitude of trust in times of need.

She also wrote and spoke in her "instructions" lessons true today. All are called to demonstrate courage and trust.

..."should we not then undertake our duties with great courage, for infinite is the love God bears to souls who repose in His protection."

Familiar Instructions, p. 11



The Legacy

Charism - a unique gift in and for the Church, the Christian community, the People of God. It is a gift freely given by the grace of God. The Mercy charism - the gift which was given to the Church through Catherine.

175 years of continued Mercy education faithful to a message of trust and courage brings all to a time of recommitment to the mission of Mercy and unwavering effort for the formation of one Mercy Education System.

This Moment in Time

The call of today is fidelity to the charism, the core values and tradition of Mercy. Charism - from the Holy Spirit, always at work within the Church.

The Formation of one Mercy Education System

Built on a firm foundation - based on trust, founded on trust, held in trust...and entrusted in shared mission. Trust - the firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something

Entrust - Assign the responsibility for doing something to (someone); put (something) into someone's care or protection; charge or invest with a trust or responsibility.

The work entrusted...

"We ought then have great confidence in God in the discharge of all these offices of mercy, spiritual and corporal – which constitute the business of our lives ..."

Catherine McAuley, "Spirit of the Institute"

Catherine feared that the poor would be denied the comprehensive services that no other group was offering, so she agreed to place her community canonically within the greater community of the Church.

"God", she said, "can bend and change and form and reform any of his creatures to fit them for the purpose he designs".

www.mercyworld.org

A Profile of the Journey

Pause to consider:

This journey to one Mercy Education System is marked by both stability, shared knowledge and experiences and continuing commitment to the process and the reality of unevenness in knowledge, experience in and with Mercy, and the reality of transition.

Therefore, every opportunity for increased awareness of the process, understanding of its implications and growth in shared commitment increases trust. It strengthens the capacity for all to accept and commit to that entrusted to them.



Each communication beginning with December 2014, the announcement of a Visioning Process, through the present, has sought to provide context for the most current happenings and progress and information on significant next steps. Those communications reporting on Institute Leadership Conference action have been shaped by the consensus action of Sister of Mercy Leadership.

Each of those communications has included commitment to fidelity, ongoing dialogue, consultation and consideration of direction.

All this inspires trust in what has taken place and what will follow.

Shared Assumptions informing ILC decision making

One Mercy Education System

founded on shared assumptions affirmed by the Sisters of Mercy

built on a governance structure to fulfill these assumptions

formed by the work of task forces which include Sisters of Mercy and women and men of Mercy entrusted with developing recommendations for the working of the system faithful to the assumptions.

Shared Assumptions



We will commit to
the Catholic
identity and Mercy
heritage of our
schools.

Shared Assumptions



The Sisters of Mercy desire a partnership with the laity in continuing the mission of Mercy education.

Shared Assumptions

The new Mercy Education System will require adequate funding and an office to provide services: formative education, oversight of mission and others to be determined.

"The union which exists among you will draw the favor and blessing of heaven."

Catherine McAuley letter to Josephine Warde, January 27, 1838.

Mutual accountability is critical to the success of this new reality.

Context

To share leadership and a role in governance in Mercy requires one to situate Mercy education within the ministry of the Sisters of Mercy and its canonical and governance structures.

Language

Language - a body of words, a system of communication, particular to and/or shared among community of persons. It is vital that the language and key terms of the canonical and governance relationships be shared and understood among the community of persons holding the mission of Mercy education in trust.

It is also important how language will be agreed upon and shared. As the system evolves and develops its language can help foster unity.

Key Context – Constitutions

These excerpts from the Constitutions of the Sisters of Mercy affirm their relationship with and for Mercy education.

"As Sisters of Mercy, we sponsor institutions to address our enduring concerns and to witness to Christ's mission. Within these institutions, we together with co-workers and those we serve, endeavor to model mercy and justice and to promote systemic change according to these ideals."

"By collaborating with others in the works of Mercy we continually learn from them how to be more merciful."

"We carry out our mission of mercy guided by prayerful consideration of the needs of our time, Catherine McAuley's preferential love for the poor and her special concern for women, the pastoral priorities of the universal and local church and our talents, resources and limitations."

Sisters of Mercy - Constitutions #5, 6, 7

Constitutions - The document approved by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, Rome, December 12, 1991, as the "rule" of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas

Key Terms

ILC – Institute Leadership Conference

ILC – Institute Leadership Conference – composed of the elected leadership teams of the six Communities and the elected Institute Leadership Team. The ILC works collaboratively, building consensus and shared commitment to actions furthering the life of the congregation and ministry.

ILT – Institute Leadership Team

The ILT is elected by the Institute Chapter. Currently the five member team serves for six years. The 2017 Institute Chapter will elect the next ILT.

Institute Chapter

The legislative and electoral assembly of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. Its purpose is to “preserve and promote our Mercy charism; elect the Institute president and council (the Institute Leadership Team); evaluate the spiritual and material well-being of the Institute; clarify our role in the Church and in society; set direction in keeping with our charism; and amend the Constitutions and the Institute directory.” (Constitutions #59)

The next Institute Chapter will be held June 2017. The path of the Sisters of Mercy informing that Chapter is the Journey of Oneness.

Community

Six Communities formed from the twenty-five regional communities of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas.

- ◆ Caribbean, Central and South America Community - CCASA
- ◆ South Central Community
- ◆ Mid-Atlantic Community
- ◆ New York, Pennsylvania, Pacific West Community - NYPPAW
- ◆ Northeast Community
- ◆ West Midwest Community

Currently, a Community of the Sisters of Mercy is the Public Juridic Person for a sponsored secondary or elementary school. In co-sponsored or shared sponsorship structures, a Community of the Sisters of Mercy and another religious community or (arch) diocese each serve as the Public Juridic Person.

When the Mercy Education System of the Americas forms, the Public Juridic Person for Mercy secondary and elementary education will be the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas.

The Mercy Education System: ILC Decisions

October 2014 – The ILC affirmed that there will be one Mercy System of Education organized under the Institute **Public Juridic Person** with governance and administrative components.

The ILC communication further stated, “Be assured that in each phase of implementation, whatever structures evolve will be attentive to our international reality, to our sponsored schools, co-sponsored entities, to educational centers, and to historically non-sponsored schools that continue to foster the Mercy charism.”

Quoted in "On the Journey", September 25, 2015



Public Juridic Person

Public Juridic Person: an entity recognized and approved by the Catholic Church to carry out a specific mission within the Church. From the Canons, the system of rules and regulations made by or adopted by ecclesiastical authority for the Catholic Church. The 1983 Code of Canon Law is the most recent revision of the Code.

Canon 116-1 and Canon 114-1

"Public juridic persons are aggregates of persons or things which are so constituted by the competent ecclesiastical authority, that within the limits set for them in the name of the Church, they fulfill a proper function entrusted to them in view of the common good, in accord with the precepts of law; other juridic persons are private." (Canon 116.1); Juridic persons are constituted either by prescription of law or by special concession of the competent authority given through a decree they are aggregates of persons or of things ordered towards a purpose congruent with the mission of the Church and which transcends the purpose of the individuals that make them up." (Canon 114-1)

Public Juridic Person

The Institute Leadership Team of the Sisters of Mercy is the Public Juridic Person for each Mercy sponsored school. The Sisters of Mercy and another congregation(s) or (arch)diocese each serve as the Public Juridic Person for a co-sponsored school. The Public Juridic Person for an affiliate school is a parish or (arch)diocese.

Catholic Schools

Each Mercy school also is within an Archdiocese or Diocese.

Catholic Schools: "Religious institutes, whose proper mission is that of education, while faithfully retaining this mission of theirs, are also to devote themselves to Catholic education through their schools established with the consent of the diocesan bishop." (Canon 801)

The Sisters of Mercy are such a Religious Institute.



March 15, 2016 - the Institute Leadership Conference "ratified a governance framework for the Mercy Education System of the Americas."

Governance

Governance: A system of relationships that facilitates participation and decision-making; the sum total of all the formal structures, relationships and operating principles. Governance for Mercy education facilitates the service rendered to fulfill the teaching mission of Jesus in the tradition of Mercy. Governance constitutes a formal support system for relatedness in Mercy, relatedness ordered to fulfill the mission.

Membership Corporation

Sisters of Mercy Institute Leadership Team - ILT

The Institute Leadership Team of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas serves as the Members of the Corporation for MERCY EDUCATION SYSTEM OF THE AMERICAS, INC.

MESA, in turn, serves as Members for each sponsored Mercy school or educational ministry corporation.



Reserved Powers of the ILT

Powers of the Members (Institute Leadership Team) for MESA, Inc.

1. The amendment or alteration of the mission and philosophy of the Corporation
2. The appointment or removal of the Directors
3. The amendment of the Articles of Incorporation
4. The Amendment or repeal of the bylaws
5. The consolidation, merger, liquidation, or dissolution of the Corporation
6. The purchase, sale, lease, disposition, or hypothecation (mortgaging) of any real property of or by the Corporation.
7. Action on any matter that is beyond the Canonical competence of the Board of Directors, including final action on any request by a member institution to dissolve, merge, consolidate, liquidate, create subsidiary corporations, or change purpose.

Board of Directors for MESA

Purpose

The Board of Directors of MESA, commonly referred to as the Governing Board, membership, authority and responsibilities will be defined and delegated by the Institute Leadership Team. The Board of Directors is to define the corporation's policies, goals, and objectives in accord with the mission and purpose of the Corporation. The Board will adopt a plan for the development and implementation of the Corporation's mission and purpose. The Board will also have oversight, as appropriate, for all MESA member Institutions.

Criteria for Selection of the MESA Board of Directors

- ◆ Demonstrated understanding and commitment to the Mercy mission of education
- ◆ Understands systems
- ◆ Knowledge of sponsorship
- ◆ Ability to focus on the "bigger picture"; has a global perspective
- ◆ Ability to ask and answer the hard questions
- ◆ Commitment to ongoing board development
- ◆ Demonstrated leadership
- ◆ Works collaboratively
- ◆ Has time and energy to devote to the development of a new board ministry
- ◆ Experience in finances
- ◆ Understanding of ecclesial relationships

Reserved Powers of MESA Board of Directors*

Reserved Powers of the MESA Board of Directors in relation to schools or educational ministries the Sisters of Mercy currently sponsor are delegated by the Institute Leadership Team. Reserved powers of the Governing Board will be named and will be reflected in the bylaws for each member educational ministry or school with a governance relationship. Current bylaws will be revised to reflect these powers as belonging to the MESA board.

1. Ratification of the CEO (upon nomination by the local board)
2. Appointment and removal of the Directors/Trustees
3. Approval of significant financial/property decisions as determined annually by MESA
4. Change in Articles and/or bylaws
5. Receive, for recommendation to the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, any request for a change in purpose
6. Receive, for recommendation to the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, any request for dissolution, merger, consolidation, liquidation, or creation of a subsidiary corporation

These powers have been approved by the Institute Leadership Conference but must still be reviewed by legal counsel for proper language. Moreover, specificity, for example "significant" in financial decisions, will be further delineated by the governing board.

Co-sponsored and Country Designated Structures

Any reserved powers and the composition and relationship of a board for co-sponsored and/or advisory council or country designated structure for international schools or educational ministries will be appropriate to the governance relationship defined in the implementation phase of forming the Mercy Education System and will be compatible with country law and co-sponsored relationships.

Affiliate schools and educational ministries

The relationship of an educational ministry or school which is an Affiliate member while not sharing a governance relationship with MESA will be based on support of the board, administration and educational community for the fidelity to the charism, core values, mission and tradition of Mercy.

Shared Mission

Board of Trustees/Directors

Board of Trustees/Directors - holds the mission in trust for the Sisters of Mercy and the Church and is accountable to the Sisters of Mercy. The board serves in a governance role with policy, planning and evaluative authority designated in the bylaws of the school corporation. The name trustees/directors is state specific in the United States and the role varies internationally.

Chief Administrator (CEO)

Chief Administrator – There is local diversity for title of chief administrator in each Mercy school, e.g. President, Principal, Head of School, Directress, Director. The bylaws state the role represented in the statement of reserved powers.

The chief administrator is entrusted with operationalizing the mission and is accountable to the board of trustees/directors or to appropriate international structures.

Administrators, Faculty, Staff, Students

The mission statement of each Mercy educational ministry or school speaks to the responsibility of all in the community to further and demonstrate fidelity to the mission. Fidelity of all to the charism, core values and tradition of Mercy is foundational to each ministry.

Extended community, Parents/guardians, Supporters and benefactors, Civic community, local Church

Mercy schools and educational ministries serve as a witness to mission and are blessed by the support of those who share in and believe in that mission. All efforts to provide support demonstrate a shared ministry valued by all.

Covenant and Covenant Document

Trust and that which is entrusted to each in the Mercy Education System will be reflected in the Covenant document. The relationship of each school and educational ministry to MESA will be defined through the Covenant and the members of MESA shall agree to be guided by the mission and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and by the charism, core values, mission and tradition of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. The accountability for this covenant will be between the school or educational ministry and the governing board of MESA. Governance issues remain with the legitimate Canonical authority of each.

The Covenant document in the process of being drafted is faithful to and consistent with the visioning process that helped lead to the formation of MESA. The Covenant document will include schools and educational ministries with these relationships:

Sister of Mercy **sponsored educational ministries and schools** with a governance relationship to the system.

Schools and educational ministries co-sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy and another congregation or (arch) diocese recognizing a shared governance structure.

Affiliate schools or educational ministries for whom the Public Juridic Person is the (arch)diocese, are educational ministries seeking affiliation with the system, having no formal governance relationship to the system, but sharing a commitment to fidelity to the charism, core values mission and tradition of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas.

Principles of Governance

Two principles of governance which will support mission decision making at all levels of MESA are:

Subsidiarity: A principle of Church governance by which decisions are to be made at the appropriate level.

Collegiality: A principle of Church governance by which responsibility is shared in order to enhance participation in the life of the Church and instill an increased sense of ownership and concern for the future.



Collegial Work in Process

Among the many initiatives for developing MESA, the Covenant document in the process of being drafted is faithful to and consistent with the visioning processes that helped lead to the formation of MESA. The Covenant document will serve as a unifying statement for school and educational ministries of MESA with foundational and core commitments. Further specific duties, processes, roles and responsibilities will be incorporated into corporate documents and system documents as planning unfolds.

Task Forces

Having begun their work in August 2015, **Task Forces** are addressing six key areas in the formation of the new system. Each addresses a need, commitment and desire for the new system. Dialogue, seeking input, analyzing existing and needed services, are all a part of the ongoing work of the task forces. The work of the task forces is vital to the formation of the new system.

◆ Mercy Education Governance

Purpose: to research and design a viable structure for the one Mercy Education System that is organized under the Institute Public Juridic Person and includes governance and administrative components. The work of this task force was integral to the presentation to the ILC in March 2016. The action resulting was the ratification of the governance framework for the Mercy Education System.

◆ Mercy Education Leadership Formation

Purpose: to inventory, evaluate and recommend programs and policies that ensure Mercy formation for those who will lead and teach in Mercy education under the auspices of the new system.

◆ Mercy Charism Standards/Accreditation

Purpose: to recommend criteria and standards of excellence that should characterize Mercy schools and the processes for assuring them, i.e., "What makes a Mercy school Mercy?"

◆ Mercy Education Financial/Sustainability

Purpose: to analyze existing resources for supporting the one Mercy Education System across all stakeholders (existing six communities, Institute, Network, others) proposing appropriate methods for providing financial support for the new system including new revenue sources such as foundations where possible, and proposing transitional processes for moving from the present state to the new system.

The work of this task force is focused on the system itself, not the financial affairs of individual schools.

◆ Mercy Education Innovation/New Initiatives

Purpose: to identify some of the creative possibilities, new initiatives and other visions of educational excellence that will be possible through one Mercy Education System. This includes technology and communication.

◆ Mercy Education Programs and Services

Purpose: to analyze and recommend the appropriate programs and services that should be provided by the one Mercy Education System to its member and affiliated schools and educational ministries. A starting point will be the services and programs offered by the current Network for Mercy Education, and by the current Mercy Communities via the Ministry Office and Sponsor Councils.

◆ Mercy Education International

Consultation with international school leaders and Community leaders began after the October 2015 meeting to give shape to the purpose and design of this task force.

Purpose: to recommend appropriate dimensions for the participation of Mercy schools in Jamaica, Guam, Philippines, Honduras, Belize and Argentina that will respect their specific governance and sponsorship conditions.

Significant Dates

◆ **Beginning June 2016**

Processes for establishing the Governing Board and identifying the Executive Director of Mercy Education System of the Americas

◆ **Ongoing**

Further implementation processes for the formation of Mercy Education System of the Americas

◆ **October 1, 2016**

Governing Board informational meeting - Holiday Inn Midway (Chicago)

◆ **October 13, 2016**

Task Force reports at the annual Mercy secondary and elementary Administrator Meeting

◆ **Mid-November 2016**

Governing Board appointments by the ILT

◆ **January 6-7, 2017**

Board of Directors' Retreat and Orientation - Belmont, SC

◆ **March 9, 2017**

Mercy Leadership Forum - Atlanta Airport Marriott

◆ **June 19-29, 2017**

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Institute Chapter Buffalo, New York

◆ **July 1, 2017**

Mercy Education System of the Americas



Upon Reflection

The following statements reflect the ongoing openness of the Sisters of Mercy and Mercy educators to address the needs of the time and to address those needs structurally and programmatically.

These statements inform the readiness needed for these times. Prayer, collaborative work and dialogue will guide work going forward.

Let all commit to a system that is dynamic, forged in trust and ever learning and developing.

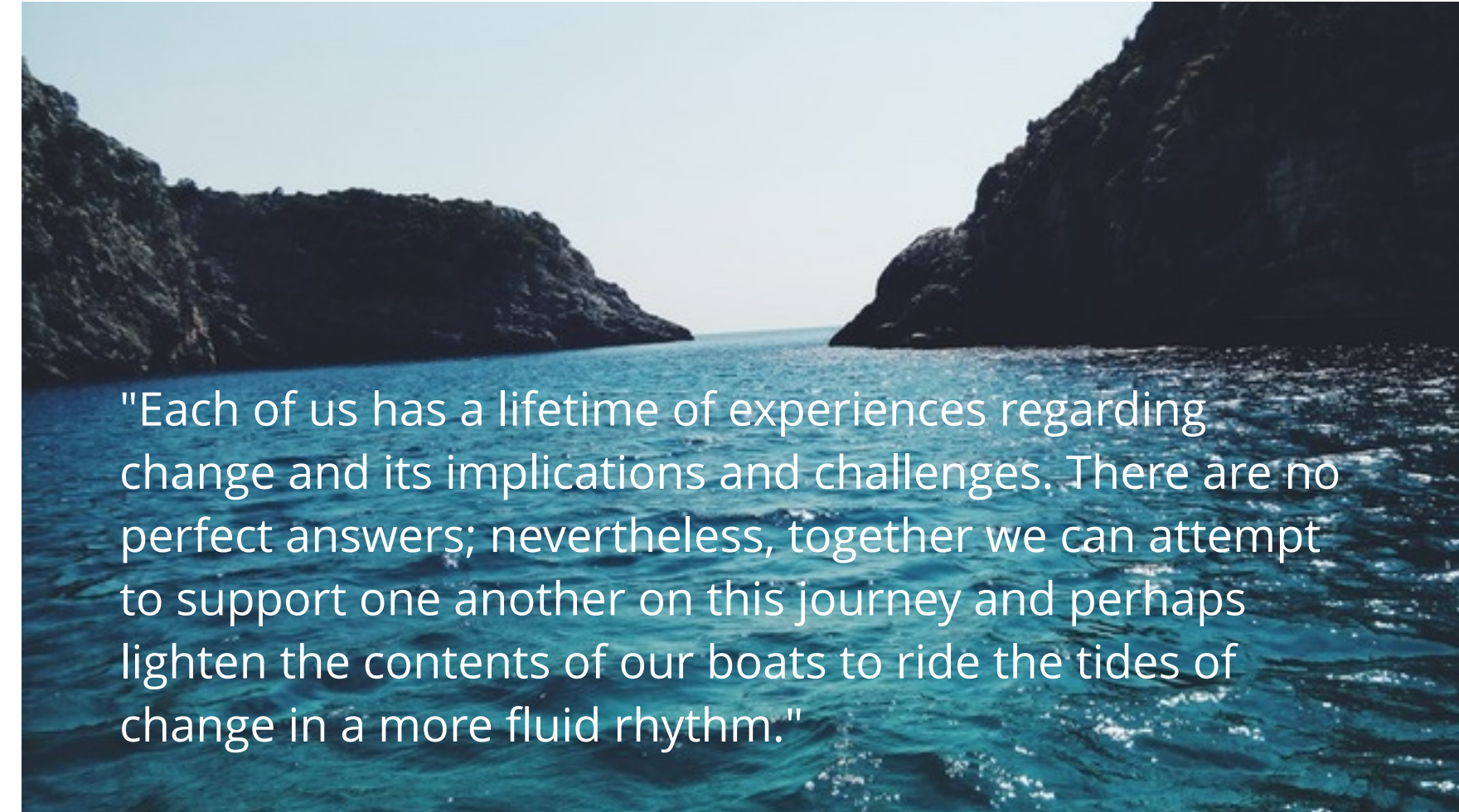
Continuous Conversion

"However viable they appear at the present time, Mercy sponsored institutions are no more and no less than particular embodiments of human endeavor. As such, they are in need of continuous conversion if they are to retain their value as witnesses to the coming reign of God – as strategies for justice."

1983 – "They Have No Wine" by Helen Amos, RSM



Openness to Change



"Each of us has a lifetime of experiences regarding change and its implications and challenges. There are no perfect answers; nevertheless, together we can attempt to support one another on this journey and perhaps lighten the contents of our boats to ride the tides of change in a more fluid rhythm."

1998 – "Tides of Change" by Richard Mary Burke, RSM

Affirmation for the Future

"On December 12, 2014, the Institute Leadership Conference (ILC) wrote to share with you that our mutual passion for service and our love of the cherished ministry of Mercy education led the ILC to affirm the decision to create one Mercy Education System. Fundamentally, we agreed to create a system of Mercy education to insure that Mercy sponsored, cosponsored and educational ministries are identified within the mission of the Catholic Church and are faithful to the charism, mission, core values and tradition of the Sisters of Mercy."

Mercy Education Leadership Committee,
April 16, 2015



Walking Together in Mercy



"To walk as a lay Mercy educator is to claim the unique call of this time for Mercy, for the Church. It is to join a long heritage of lay women and men who have led and served in and for Mercy education. It is at this time to accept and claim new leadership and roles to ensure Catholic, Mercy secondary and elementary education into the future."

Reflection "On the Horizon",
September 25, 2015

Resource Links

www.mercyinternational.ie—Mercy International Centre is the site of the House of Mercy, Baggot Street, Dublin, Ireland, the original house of Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy. Using this former link will direct one to www.mercyworld.org. Visit this site to learn more about the Sisters of Mercy and its founding; virtually tour the House of Mercy and learn more about the Sisters of Mercy.

www.sistersofmercy.org—the main site for the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. Visit this site to learn more about its history, mission, ministerial works, locations, communities and more.

www.mercyworld.org—the site of the Mercy International Association, an organization of the leaders of Mercy Congregations, Institutes and Federations throughout the world. This site has extensive resources for all wishing to further Mercy in the world.

www.netmercyed.org—as shared in the Common Narrative, November 2015, "During this time of transition the Network for Mercy Education website will continue to be the location for posting formal communications including this meeting summary and communication going forward as needed."

This resource is a product of shared commitment to trust and courage. It invites reflection at one moment in time, with many moments to come in the shaping of one Mercy Education System.

Together - One journey to one Mercy Education System...

Then - with Catherine McAuley, all can say,

"Hurrah for foundations, makes the old
young and the young merry."

Letter to Cecilia Marmion January 4, 1841

Image credits page 5, 14, 33, 40 www.mercyworld.org

Prepared in service, August 2016

One Mercy Education System

To Hold in Trust