



VOLUME 1  
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In her day, Catherine McAuley brought her heart to misery and in the self-gift released a call still heard. By courageous, contagious concern for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the poor, the sick and the ignorant, she broke through the impossibilities of her time. She animated many to walk with her. She animated others at centers of wealth, power, and influence to share in her heroic efforts. She connected the rich to the poor, the healthy to the sick, the educated and skilled to the uninstructed, the influential to those of no consequence, the powerful to the weak to do the work of God on earth.

— M. Joanna Regan, RSM

# WOMEN OF MERCY Comments

SISTERS OF MERCY OF THE AMERICAS

NEW YORK • PENNSYLVANIA • PACIFIC WEST COMMUNITY

*“The only gift  
God asks of us is a  
return of love”*

— Catherine McAuley, Foundress of the Sisters of Mercy

## The Legacy of Friendship

The Sisters of Mercy have friends all over the world, but the Sisters in Rochester have two close friends right around the corner! Joe and Pat Kelly live within walking distance of the Mercy Center in Rochester and have been friends with the Sisters for what seems like forever!

Joe grew up in Elmira, NY where he attended Notre Dame High School from 1957 to 1961. There he met the Sisters of Mercy for the first time. Joe remembers that the school, which had opened only two years before, was staffed by “an amazing group of religious women who gave their all to build up a first-rate school.” More than 50 years later, four of the original founding Sisters, Sisters Edwina Butler, Corrine Cimineri, Carmella Coene and Jane Frances Hauser, are still “going strong” in keeping the tradition of the school alive. Even today, these women continue to be special friends of the Kellys and Notre Dame High School is a top priority for their support.



Joe & Pat Kelly

When Joe finished college, he returned to Elmira to teach 7th and 8th grades at St. Cecilia’s, one of the schools staffed by the Sisters of Mercy. Now

he was hooked! His association with the Sisters has continued throughout his life. When Joe and his wife Pat were married in 1972, several Sisters from Notre Dame made the trip to Cleveland to celebrate with them. The Sisters often hosted family parties for the Kellys at the Notre Dame convent and they were always present at Kelly graduations, special anniversaries and funerals. The Sisters were indeed “part of the family.” In 1999,

*continued on page 8...*



Dear Friends of Mercy,  
*"It takes a lot of courage to release the familiar and seemingly secure, to embrace the new."* This quote from Alan Cohen is reflective of where we find ourselves as a country, a world and certainly as the Sisters of Mercy as we move further into 2009. It takes a great deal of

courage to leave the known and move into the unknown. Over the past several years, the Sisters of Mercy have done exactly that.

We are well into our second year as the New York, Pennsylvania, Pacific West Community. While our commitment to our Mercy mission has remained steady and strong, many other things have changed within the Sisters of Mercy and our ministries. We have consolidated our administrative and leadership functions so that we are using fewer resources on ourselves in order to have more resources for mission. We have instituted two Sponsorship Councils whose task it is to oversee our ministries in order to assure that the Mercy mission will continue into the future. We are collaborating with other Mercy communities on investments, information technology, communication, justice initiatives, new membership etc.

While we believe that these changes are for the better, it has not been easy. The sisters have moved from a place of knowing everyone in our religious community to needing to learn the names and life stories of sisters and associates in four other areas. Leadership now spends a good portion of its time traveling from place to place, becoming familiar with the sisters, the ministries and the Mercy friends and benefactors in each area.

Yes, it does take a lot of courage to move from the familiar and the adjustment can be difficult; however, I believe that this new reality is from God and embracing and welcoming it will lead us into a graced rebirth of energy for mission and commitment to bringing the mercy of God into our world in new ways. In the name of the Sisters of Mercy, I wish to thank you, our friend and benefactor, for your support and companionship on our journey into the unfamiliar and new. Please know that you are constantly in our prayers.

*Sister Nancy Hoff, RSM*

Sister Nancy Hoff, RSM,  
 President



Dear Friends,  
 This is my first opportunity to wish you many blessings for the New Year! It is hard to believe another year has gone by—seems the older I get, the quicker each year goes by!

As we begin this New Year, I would first of all like to thank you for your kindness and support of the Sisters of Mercy throughout the years and especially during this time of transition.

Our New York, Pennsylvania, Pacific West Community Development Office has been operative since the middle of August 2008 and is gradually coming to "full staff". Sisters Sally Walz and Bernadette Bell have recently returned from sabbaticals and Sister Sheila Marie Walsh has recently returned from her ministry in Guyana. We are gradually putting in place a department that will serve each of you, our special friends, very well.

We realize it may be hard to understand that our new Development office serves all the sisters in Buffalo, Erie, Pittsburgh, Rochester and the Philippines because we are still getting used to it ourselves!

I hope you enjoyed the "Maiden Voyage" of our Mercy Moments Newsletter which includes information about many of our ministries. In this issue we will feature several of those special ministries so that you can better understand and support what the Sisters of Mercy are doing to improve the quality of life for others.

All of our sisters joyfully serve others in light of our commitment as Sisters of Mercy and follow in the footsteps of our Foundress, Catherine McAuley. As you are aware, many sisters work in the ministries featured in our newsletters which are the responsibility of the Sisters of Mercy while many other sisters work in individual ministries and bring that same Mercy presence to their workplace.

I hope you enjoy our second issue of Mercy Moments which explains many ways that you can be part of the Mercy Mission and help us continue our Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy. As always, you are continually included in the prayers of all the Sisters of Mercy throughout the New York, Pennsylvania, Pacific West Community.

*Sister Peggy Gorman, RSM*

Sister Peggy Gorman, RSM,  
 Chief Development Officer



It was  
the worst of  
Christmas'...  
It was  
the best  
of Christmas'

By Peter J. Riga



### A TOUCHING LETTER OF INSPIRATION FROM ONE OF OUR DONORS

I grew up in the city. My parents were Italian immigrants from Sicily and Calabria. We were very poor, grew our own vegetables when it was not chic to do so and picked crops in the fields for four summer months a year. That money earned was to pay for a year's mortgage by special arrangement with the local bank. We literally picked for our lives so that we would not be evicted to the streets: 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. with a half hour for lunch, seven days a week.

During the rest of the year I attended public grammar school where I learned next to nothing. My parents sent me to first year Catholic high school under the strict supervision of Sister Mary Claudia. You learned or else!

At that time, the suburbs where we resided were mostly woods and forest where we played cowboys and Indians. And every afternoon we went down to the cross train tracks to wait for the 4:30 special of the Lehigh Valley RR. Every time it would pass, the engineer blew his whistle just to thrill the bunch of us kids and he would throw us a bag full of goodies: candy, sandwiches, fruit—a whole variety of things which we split up and ate with alacrity. We came to call him the “Candy Man” and I remember him with great respect and fondness because he knew we were poor and it was his way of showing us that he cared. I never got to know his name to this day. He was simply “The Candy Man.”

Once during the Christmas season when my mother baked cookies, I managed to take a dozen of them, wrapped them neatly in Christmas gift paper to give something back to the Candy man who had given me so much joy during all those years of my early youth. So after Mass on Christmas morning, I rushed down to the train switching station to give the Candy Man my humble gift. There was a new engineer on the 4:30 special and I asked him where the regular engineer was. It is so cruel to break terrible news to an eight year old but the new engineer told me nonchalantly that the other “guy” died of a heart attack a few days before. He told me to eat the cookies myself. He had not a word of compassion or sorrow in his expression or for the sorrow that was mine. I threw the cookies into a creek that flowed by the station and I cried all the way home. It was the saddest Christmas of my life and I spent the rest of that day in my room weeping for the death of a first born because he was the first born friend I ever had. I couldn't tell my mother or I would have been beaten (that was the Italian way of disapproval) for stealing cookies. So, I fell asleep because the pain was too great for my young heart to bear. Sleep comes as comfort for the weeping soul. It was the worst of all my Christmases.

I woke up the next morning and made a vow that in honor of the Candy Man, that when I grew up, I would give whatever I had to street bums, policemen, guards, beggars and all those who asked for a hand out not only during Christmas but all during the year just as the Candy Man had done. His example and my memory of him gave me courage and joy ever since. My Christmas is no longer only on December 25th but on every day of the year, at least when I have the means to do so. I have kept that vow all during these years.

*“God bless us, everyone.”*

Now that I am an old man, that example of Candy Man remains with me. I only hope and pray that somehow he knows what a great effect he had on me when he graced me with his love and generosity during all those days at 4:30 p.m. on the Lehigh Valley Special express. I shall never forget him and hope with all my soul that God will let me meet him after I die to give him the thanks that I had never had the opportunity to give him way back then on that terrible Christmas day; and to tell him that his acts of generosity made every day Christmas Day for me. Then both of us can give eternal thanks to the loving Father who inspired both of us with his love, who is the source of love who inspired our love.

As Tiny Tim would say...“God Bless us Everyone.”



IN THIS ISSUE OF MERCY MOMENTS, OUR FEATURED MINISTRIES WERE SELECTED IN HARMONY WITH THE TROUBLING TIMES FACED BY THOSE IN NEED—THE NEGLECTED CHILDREN WITH NO FAMILY OR A PLACE TO CALL HOME; THE POOR, WHO EVERY DAY, STRIVE TO MAKE ENDS MEET; THE HUNGRY WHO ARE BEWILDERED IN KNOWING WHERE THEIR NEXT MEAL WILL BE COMING FROM; THE UNDERSERVED SUFFERING FROM ILLNESS WHO CANNOT PURSUE MEDICAL CARE DUE TO LACK OF MONEY; AND THE ELDERLY SEEKING QUALITY OF LIFE TO SUSTAIN THEM IN THEIR SENIOR YEARS.

# Featured Ministries of the Sisters of Mercy

in the New York, Pennsylvania, Pacific West Community

## Andrews Center



Sr. Kathleen Kolmer comforts one of the children abandoned by his parents.

Established over 30 years ago under the sponsorship of the Sisters of Mercy, Andrews Center is a special service home providing 24-hour care for children who cannot be placed in typical foster care due to their multiple needs.

Andrews Center was originally started at St. Andrews Church (hence its name) by Sister Gaye Moorhead, RSM in 1974, where it remained until 1990 when they moved to the St. James Convent building connected to St. James Church. Here, senior sisters reside in a section of the building with the majority of the structure used for Andrews Center.

Sister Kathleen Kolmer, RSM became a foster mother and joined the staff of Andrews Center three years after they opened their doors in 1974. Sister Kathleen receives help on a daily basis from Sister Mary Clare Bollow, RSM, as well as Barbara Milliman who also serves as a foster mother. Other men and women volunteer their time to visit, play, read and care for the children.

Andrews Center can care for up to six young children at a time—some stay for a couple of days and others as long as two–three years. The children range in age from infancy to twelve years of age. Many suffer from emotional, medical or physical disabilities such as Down’s syndrome, an inability to see, walk or speak, HIV, or sickle cell anemia. They come with feeding tubes, burns on their body, tracheotomies, and even some with a Colostomy. Compounding their hardship, most have also known abuse or neglect.

The staff and volunteers at Andrews Center provide a warm and loving home life as well as professional care for their physical and/or emotional problems. They make an effort to build self-esteem into the healing process as well. They provide a stable, nurturing environment for children while their family units are trying to be restored.



Andrews Center has developed their own ‘ministry within a ministry.’ They focus on caring for the total child and follow their progress by keeping in touch as they move on and into new life experiences. They continue to be a reliable resource for families in crisis. Many of their former children and their families are the recipients of donations of food and clothing as well as continued moral support throughout the year.

**The staff and volunteers at Andrews Center provide a warm and loving home life as well as professional care for their physical and/or emotional problems.**

Andrews Center is the only ministry of its kind in the Rochester area. For the children, it is a safe, loving haven for them to grow. Laughter is always welcome at the center. The happy noises come from little ones who have not had much to laugh about in their short lives. The children and their families have suffered through tragedies beyond our imagination.

Over the past 30 years, more than 200 children have passed through the doors of Andrews Center. Each of these children is special and unique. Each has a story...each has known suffering. The staff and volunteers at Andrews Center give these children the best life possible while they are with them... and continue to serve them beyond their stay.

## Forever Young— Mercy Center on Aging A Senior Daytime Program

Since 1973, Mercy Center on Aging has been enriching the lives of senior adults in the Erie, Pennsylvania region. Their mission—to develop and maintain a diversity of quality daytime programs that promote the essential interests of senior adults, thereby enhancing their quality of life.

Situated adjacent to the Sisters of Mercy Motherhouse, this location makes it easily accessible for those seniors living in the Mercy Terrace Apartments next door. For others living in the surrounding area, a shuttle bus is available for their transportation to the Center.

Under the direction of Sister Mary Dolores Jablonski, RSM, Mercy Center on Aging offers activities and classes designed to increase the physical and/or mental fitness of older adults as well as providing information, recreation and enjoyment. It is a multi-purpose senior center that offers a wide variety of innovative, high quality activities to suit the interest and needs of our senior adults.

Some of the activities include card games, creative art, exercise classes, decorative crafts, computer literacy,

calligraphy, choral groups and learning how to dance—everything from belly dancing to ballroom dancing! Classes are also held in quilting, knitting and crocheting.

The activities are unending—when the seniors are not participating in these activities, they attend social events, take day trips or attend local speaking engagements on current events. Monthly social gatherings are always on the agenda from indoor winter picnics to Inaugural celebrations complete with pizza and refreshments. Deborah Kraus, Program Director, quoted one of the seniors as saying “I don’t know what I would do if I didn’t come here.” Deborah further said, “it gives them a purpose—the socialization gives them a whole new outlook on life.”



Dance classes keep them forever young—these lovely ladies take a break from their dancing to pose for a photo.

Other services include an in-house beauty shop, health services, income tax assistance and referrals, Notary services and daily lunches with the sisters. Membership fees are minimal making it affordable for all senior adults.

**“...it gives them a purpose—the socialization gives them a whole new outlook on life.”**

Attendance at Mercy Center on Aging soars at over 100 people per week—seniors engaging themselves daily in the spirit of life and fun—keeping them forever young!



## Featured Ministries of the Sisters of Mercy in the New York, Pennsylvania, Pacific West Community

### Intersection— A Crossroad for Those in Need

Founded in 1972, Intersection serves individuals and families in McKeesport, Pennsylvania and the surrounding areas who are economically poor, disadvantaged, and in need. Many persons come to Intersection who are unable to find help from any other source. Respect for the dignity of each person is of primary importance.



Guests enjoy a mid-day meal at Intersection—for some, it is their only meal that day.

Under the direction of Sister Malachy O’Neill, RSM, and Sister Bonnie Heh, RSM, Intersection provides a hot on-site midday meal to people who are hungry and do not have a permanent residence nor adequate kitchen facilities. Last year, Intersection served a total of 19,238 dinners.

A food pantry club was also established to serve income-eligible residents with children. In 2007, over 2,729 food orders were distributed consisting of canned goods, cereal, pasta, dairy products, fresh fruit, bread, and packaged and frozen foods to more than 500 families. Recipes and menus, bedding, household

goods, paper products, cleaning supplies and other miscellaneous items are also available to the pantry club families.

Other services include distribution of gently used clothing, quilts, bedrolls and blankets, and personal hygiene products. A Children’s Program was initiated in 1993 and shortly thereafter; on-site health services were made available. Intersection also works in collaboration with numerous other human service agencies for emergency situations such as housing support and assistance with rent or utilities.

There are no fees charged for any of the programs or services at Intersection. Staff consists of approximately sixty dedicated volunteers, some of whom are program participants. The richness of Intersection is its diversity and inclusiveness—the mingling of guest, donor, volunteer—the sharing and celebrating of our common humanity!

### McAuley Center for Abused Women and Children

This unique ministry of the Sisters of Mercy opened its doors in February 2002, to serve women and children who were abandoned, orphaned, exploited, raped or physically or sexually abused.

McAuley Center is the first of its kind on the island of Mindanao in the Philippines and can house up to 30 residents with an average length of stay from 5-6 months, or longer if needed. The average age is anywhere from 6-20 years; some as young as 4 years old have resided in this program.

Our cases are overwhelming with rape and incest as the highest in number.



McAuley Center – a safe haven where healing can begin from the ravages of abuse and exploitation.

The women and girls who become pregnant as a result of the abuse, reside at McAuley Center until their baby is born. The infants are then put up for adoption.

Sister Nimfa Exchaure, RSM, serves as Director and House Parent of the shelter, assisted by a Counselor, Social Worker, Psychologist, and Psychiatrist. On any given day, many Sisters of Mercy, during their free time, volunteer their services to the women and girls.

McAuley Center residents participate in educational/therapy programs designed to help them reduce the incidence of abuse in their living situations. Resident classes, group sessions and lessons in developing living skills are held on a daily basis. Young girls requiring formal education are tutored in-house or enrolled in local schools.

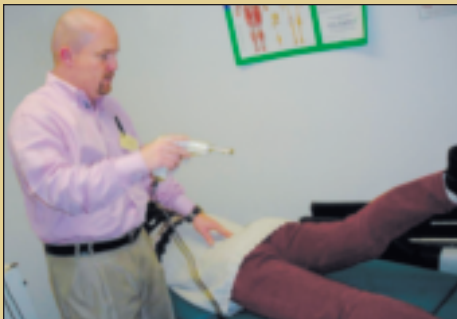
The staff at McAuley Center places the highest emphasis on reverencing the dignity of each person—regardless of age. Here, the vision and daily work of our Foundress, Catherine McAuley, are fully embraced serving the economically poor and emotionally bruised women and children.



## Mercy Outreach Center—the “Jewel” of Rochester

Established in 1977 by Corpus Christi Parish, the Center became a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of Mercy in 2000. Their mission—commitment to making the highest quality health, emotional and spiritual care available to the uninsured and underserved. To meet these needs, the Center uses community resources and collaborates with a broad range of professional and lay volunteers by providing support staff and treatment facilities.

Their mission is accomplished through the talents of more than 160 volunteers and a staff of 2 full time and 9 part time women and men of the greater Rochester area. These services are provided free of charge. The Center also networks with the various agencies and neighborhood groups to help access services beyond those provided at the Center.



Chiropractic care is one of the many health services available at Mercy Outreach Center.

Volunteer healthcare professionals include physicians, nurse practitioners, a physician assistant, chiropractors, nurses, and acupuncturist; massage therapists, dentists, dental hygienists, dental assistants, and others. Other volunteers include a board of directors, committee members, receptionists, buildings and grounds assistants and attorneys.

Mercy Outreach Center health services include Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, Pediatric, Dentistry, Ophthalmology, Podiatry, Counseling, Chiropractic, Ear, Nose and Throat, Massage, Reiki, Acupuncture, and health education. They also offer advocacy and referrals, legal consultation, income tax assistance and community support services. All services are free of charge, though donations are welcome. The majority of those served are employed but unable to afford the cost of insurance.

Last year, over 5,445 clients passed through the doors of Mercy Outreach Center with over 6,960 volunteer hours by medical professionals. At Mercy Outreach Center you’ll always find caring professionals who go out of their way for patients in need.

## Steuben County Rural Ministry

This ministry has been in existence since 1980 when Sister Margaret Louise Snider, RSM, observed a dire need to assist the rural poor in Steuben County, located in the southern tier of New York State. The County covers approximately 280 square miles.

The people in this economically depressed area struggle daily with dwindling job opportunities, lack of transportation to get them to employment outside their townships, and local minimum wage jobs that are insufficient to fully support them or their families. There is also a lack of daycare services deterring parents from obtaining employment. Since 1980, this ministry has served over 32,000 people in the southern tier area. Last year alone, more than 3,069 people were assisted with food and clothing—of those served, 2,206 were children and 223 were elderly.

In 2000, Sister Susan Cain, RSM, was appointed Director of the Steuben County Rural Ministry. Along with her 16 dedicated volunteers, Sister assists the disadvantaged people of this area with supplemental food, used clothing, household needs such as bedding and furniture, prescription assistance, fuel expenses and emergency services.



Sister Susan Cain works tirelessly at her ministry to serve the people who come to her for assistance.

Besides individual donations, the Food Bank of the Southern Tier provides the majority of food that is delivered on a regular basis. Other local organizations donate food, clothing and in-kind gifts throughout the year. During the holidays, gifts of turkeys, hams, children’s toys, and clothing are dropped off for those who would otherwise have a very meager Christmas. At Easter time, donations of chocolate candies are supplied for the children of the families served.

Steuben County Rural Ministry works in collaboration with Catholic Charities, Red Cross, Salvation Army, social organizations, and grocery stores. They also work in conjunction with the local churches in the area—Baptist, Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian and Wesleyan. As Sister Susan states, “These are organizations with very large hearts and a great love for those in need.”



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Joe was invited to give a series of talks at Mercy International Center in Dublin. In telling of this experience, Joe said that “visiting Catherine’s home at Baggott Street was a high-point of my life.” In recent years, all of the sisters at the Rochester Mercy Center, many living in retirement, have become a welcoming and supportive community for the Kellys. 2009 marks Joe’s 10th anniversary as an Associate of the Sisters of Mercy.

Joe and Pat have long embraced the ministry work of the Sisters of Mercy. Both had professional jobs (Joe as a Professor of Religious Studies at Nazareth College and Pat as a Nephrology Social Worker at Genesee Hospital) and felt strongly that they wanted to give financial support to Mercy ministry efforts. Mercy Outreach Center, an agency that facilitates health care for people who are uninsured or underinsured, seemed like the right choice. Joe and Pat first helped the Sisters to secure funding for an additional building for the Center and then became involved in the ministry itself. Joe serves on the Board of Directors and last summer during a transition period for the Center, served as Interim Executive Director.

Now that they are retired, Joe and Pat have decided to join the Legacy Society of the Sisters of Mercy. They know that they want to help to continue the ministry of the Sisters into the future. Pat explained that “the Sisters are able to do wonderful work that we want to support wholeheartedly.” The Legacy of Friendship continues!

# What Greater Gift...

As you finished reading the article about Pat and Joe, you hopefully found there was much “food for thought.” To build on their generosity and provide insights, we are including some further information that you may find helpful when thinking along these lines...

As we get older, many of us find it difficult to think about the day when we will die and have to leave this world and move to another world that has been promised to us. But as you know, God has told us He has prepared a special place for us, beyond our expectations. What wonderful gifts God has given us—the gift of life on earth and the gift of life everlasting in heaven.

We, as Sisters of Mercy, devote our lives to performing God’s work on earth by helping those in need. You, as a friend and donor of the Sisters of Mercy, have enabled us to continue our ministries and for that, we are most grateful.

Most of us, if given a chance, would like to leave some kind of lasting Legacy to show that our lives have made a difference in society; that in some way, we have contributed to an important work or cause that will benefit the lives of others for generations to come. When you give a gift to support the Sisters of Mercy, you are doing just that—leaving a Legacy for the future.

## WHY WOULD YOU DO SUCH A THING?

Well, experience has shown that once a person makes the decision to leave a legacy, they enjoy a satisfying FEELING OF ACCOMPLISHMENT. Yes, there are FINANCIAL BENEFITS, but the truth is that those benefits are generally

a minor factor. For many, this is a SPIRITUAL experience. Often decisions like this come after reflecting on the many blessings God has given us. For others, this decision represents a COMMITMENT TO CARRY OUT THE GOSPEL INSTRUCTION to share what one has with those in need.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM CONSIDERING INCLUDING THE SISTERS OF MERCY IN MY ESTATE PLANNING?

It’s easy! Here are some suggestions for you to get started –

- 1) Make an appointment with your attorney, professional advisor or an accountant—they will get you off on the right foot by advising you of the various ways in which you can make a gift.
- 2) If you already have a Will, be sure it is updated and include the Sisters of Mercy.
- 3) Designate the Sisters of Mercy as a partial or full beneficiary of your life insurance policy or IRA.

Remember, a Legacy is any gift or bequest passed from one person to another or to a favorite institution. Amount doesn’t really matter in the definition of a Legacy.

As someone whose friendship we cherish, we would be very pleased to work with you to make arrangements for a lasting gift that works best for you and your family.

For further information or questions, please contact Sister Peggy Gorman, RSM at (716) 821-1648 or [pgorman@mercyrypaw.org](mailto:pgorman@mercyrypaw.org).



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