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‘Cordial’ Relationships Key to Mercy Life

To Sister Sheila Carney, the need for Sisters of Mercy to develop “cordial relationships” with each other is key to Catherine McAuley’s legacy and pivotal to the life of the worldwide community she founded.

In a talk May 1 at Mercy Center, Buffalo, sponsored by Mercy Associates with the Sisters of Mercy New York, Pennsylvania, Pacific West Community, she noted that Catherine was quick to point out that the success of the order was not dependent on the talents of the sisters as much as on their care for one another. More than 100 sisters and associates attended the talk.

Sister Sheila, vice postulator for Catherine’s canonization, described cordiality among sisters as “relationship flowing from their hearts.”

Quoting Catherine, she said, “The prosperity and advancement of the order neither depends on nor should be attributed to the good reader, writer or transcriber – although such are very desirable – but to the humble, cordial, affectionate, obliging, complying and charitable sister.”

Sister Sheila also addressed Catherine’s canonization process, which she described as “long, detailed and careful.” Pope John Paul II declared Catherine “venerable” on April 9, 1990, the first of three steps to sainthood. Today, promoters of her canonization are collecting information that would verify a miracle necessary for beatification, the second step for sainthood. Also, they continue to promote Catherine’s cause through public lectures and seminars and call attention to the celebration of Nov. 11, the date of Catherine’s death, and Dec. 12, when people are invited to wrap the world in prayer for Catherine’s beatification.

Said Sister Sheila: “I pray for this cause because I want my church, in seeking an image for its holiness, to see the face of Catherine McAuley. I pray for her canonization, not because Catherine needs the authorization of the church to prove her sanctity, but because the Church needs her witness.”

The Sisters of Mercy New York, Pennsylvania, Pacific West Community is comprised of Buffalo, Erie, the Philippines, Pittsburgh and Rochester.