WALKING IN MERCY

Newsletter of the Institute Office of Association

March 2026

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CCASA Mercy Associates

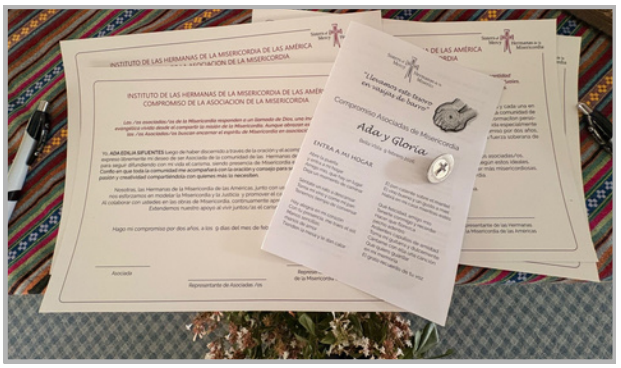
By: María del Carmen Pérez, Mercy Associate

CCASA is one of the Institute regions made up of eight countries from Latin America and the Caribbean (Argentina, Belize, Chile, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Panama and Peru). In each country, future associates are formed and commitments are made. Last week, two new associates were incorporated in Argentina: Ada Sifuentes from Moreno, Buenos Aires and Gloria Buchiniz from Neuquen.

The ceremony took place at the Mercy Spirituality Center in Bella Vista, Buenos Aires. It was broadcast via zoom because, due to the country´s size, there are associate groups in both the north and the south. At a previous retreat, the candidates wrote their letter of commitment and chose details of the ceremony. With the presence of sisters, associates and friends, the ceremony unfolded in an orderly and very moving manner. Readings and songs created the perfect ambiance. There was sharing in small groups and a dance took place. Then came the moment to make the commitment, read the acts and pin the Mercy badges.



Two new associates, Ada Sifuentes from Moreno, Buenos Aires & Gloria Buchiniz from Neuquen sign their covenants.



New Associate covenants.

Those present were able to express congratulations and wishes to the new associates. The ceremony concluded with the reading of the Suscipe.



Above: Merion Mercy Academy Baccalaureate Mass (2007)
From Left: Kathleen Thomas, Meghan Carrigan, Erika Javage Larrimer, Kerri Smyth, Lindsay McDonnell

A Journey through Formation

By: Jamie Landry, Mercy Associate

"Welcoming and affirming." That's how Erika Larrimer, a pre-associate, describes her associate formation experience with the Mobile/Baldwin (Alabama) Mercy Associates.

Larrimer, a graduate of Merion Mercy Academy, a Sisters of Mercy sponsored all-girls school in Merion Station, Pennsylvania, first learned about Mercy Associates from teachers who were associates. Her school days gave her a chance to be in community with Sisters of Mercy as well as benefit from the example of lay people living the Mercy charism. After graduating from Merion Mercy, Erika's sisters Jess and Deanna Javage became Mercy Associates, inspiring Erika to begin her own discernment process. "While at Merion Mercy Academy, I enjoyed being in community with other women (and men) who shared common beliefs and values, rooted their faith in action, and felt called to advocate on behalf of others. I felt called to become a Mercy Associate so that I could continue living within such a community and intentionally build a legacy of social justice."

As a new mother, Erika feels a call to model for her daughter "a life grounded in compassion, advocacy, and responsibility to others." She feels especially drawn to the Critical Concern for women and seeks to incorporate this concern through relationships, mentorships and advocacy. She believes this call "includes accompanying women as they navigate education, career/life transitions, leadership development, and personal growth, while also committing to ongoing learning about the systemic barriers women face and supporting initiatives that promote equity, access, and justice for women and girls."



Deanna Javage's graduation from Merion Mercy Academy.
From Left: Erika Javage Larrimer, Jeannine Javage (mom), Deanna Javage, and Jessica Javage.
Jess and Deanna are Mercy Associates.

Erika currently resides in Birmingham, Alabama, and she has felt welcomed, valued and supported by the Mobile/Baldwin associate group during her virtual formation process. She has been inspired by the varied ways the associates and sisters live out the Critical Concerns, and looks forward to following their example to deepen her own practices of Mercy, following in the footsteps of Catherine McAuley. She has completed the formation process, and her covenant ceremony will be held at the Convent of Mercy in Mobile in March of 2026. Sisters and associates will joyfully welcome the newest (and youngest) member of their Mercy community and the new ideas and inspiration she will bring.



A Reflection of 50 years as a Mercy Associate

By: Rev. Rosanne Anderson, Mercy Associate

As I reflect on fifty years as a Mercy Associate, I am struck by the very first line of Catherine McAuley's Suscipe: "My God, I am yours for time and eternity. . .". I am profoundly aware of God's providence and guidance in my life. When one has lived three quarters of a century, it is a great gift to be able to look back on life and see the threads of continuity that have been woven into a beautiful tapestry.

My earliest memory of a Sister of Mercy was my first-grade teacher, Sister Virginia Mary. I am not sure what it was that attracted me to her - most likely the fact that she was a very kind woman. I also really liked the look of the habit that she wore. Then, again, it could have been the nudging of the Holy Spirit. I just knew that I wanted to be like her - I wanted to be a Sister of Mercy.

Throughout grade school and high school, I continued to feel a call to live out the values of the Mercy community in service to those in need. I was accepted as a candidate after graduation from high school. My plans changed abruptly when my father experienced a debilitating stroke shortly after graduation. My mother had health issues as well, so I chose to postpone my entrance into the Mercy community to remain home and care for both of my them.

About a year later, the General Chapter of 1969 provided an exploration of commitment to the Mercy community in the form of an associate. It was a privilege to be among the first associates to make covenant only a few years later. I once again felt the nudging of the Holy Spirit, and I felt a call to ordained ministry. It was a persistent call which I could not ignore. I now have been an ordained pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for thirty years.

Mercy continues to be the core of my life. Catherine often spoke of Mercy being the principal path pointed out by Jesus to those who desire to follow Him. I continue each day to serve in Mercy, knowing that I am God's for time and eternity. I am grateful for the tapestry of my life in Mercy, knowing that "we have one solid comfort amidst this little tripping about, our hearts can always be in the same place, centered in God, for whom alone we go forward or stay back."



From Left: Bishop Craig Satterlee and Rev. Rosanne Anderson.



Omaha Welcomes the Stranger

By: Linda Leary, Mercy Associate

Mission Statement: "Omaha Welcomes the Stranger (OWS) strives to serve migrants fleeing violence and persecution in their home countries by providing safety, hospitality, hope and assistance with establishing new lives in the United States."

OWS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded in 2022 by Tom and Margaret Hoarty, along with the Sisters from Mercy, the Servants of Mary (Servites) and the Notre Dame Sisters. It was formed to assist asylum seekers arriving at the southern border at a time when the numbers of people crossing the border were overwhelming the shelters there. These migrants were fleeing violence, persecution, and drought in their home countries.

OWS provides temporary shelter, food, basic health care, and helps these families connect with friends and family in the U.S. OWS also provides financial assistance for the cost of travel. They collaborate with local churches and service providers, as well as many volunteers, to fulfill the mission of providing compassionate care to immigrants.

In April 2014 two Omaha Catholic parishes, St. Pius X and St. Leo the Great, sponsored a family of four from a Thailand refugee camp. I immediately felt the desire to help them acclimate to this new country. Parishioners set up their new apartment with donations of new and used furniture and household goods.

The family came through Lutheran Family Services (LFS) with the help of a translator. The family was met at the airport with welcome signs and smiles. The LFS contact couple, Margaret and Tom Hoarty, from St. Pius X introduced me to the family. Jennifer, a special education teacher and volunteer, and I coached the children and mother in English for several months.

Soon, other family members arrived. Jennifer and I taught the women how to ride the bus, which gave them the freedom to transport themselves to their English classes. I worked with the family for three to four years and witnessed the delivery of their third little boy, Olando, and a cousin's baby boy, Genesis. Tom, another volunteer, taught the mothers to drive and arranged their first car purchases. Eventually they bought their own homes, and the first family welcomed their fourth baby boy.

I will always have a special, compassionate and Mercy-filled attitude and action toward people seeking shelter and will continue to see Jesus in their eyes. "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me." - *Matthew 25:35*



The grounds at Mercy Ecospirituality Center.

Mercy Ecospirituality Center (MEC)

By: Sue-Rae Glinka, Mercy Associate

A real hidden gem in rural Benson, Vermont is the Mercy Ecospirituality Center (MEC). The MEC is a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of Mercy that the Vermont associates actively support.

They focus on being "committed to reflection, education and living gently in mutual relationship with the Earth. We offer hospitality for those seeking solace and to refresh their spirit in the beauty of creation, as well as programs in ecospirituality." (mercyecology.org)

It is both a haven from the busyness of life and a place to learn about and reflect on the interconnectedness of all of God's creation. But that is not all—the executive director, Kayla Buxton, is also a Mercy Associate! Kayla brings a love of creation and desire to share in the awareness of the divine in all living beings through our care of the Earth.

Mercy Associate Cindy Thompson came to know and love MEC as a volunteer with Mercy Volunteer Corps (MVC), when she worked for two summers at the farm together with her husband. She returns to the farm at every opportunity, and she was eventually invited to become a trustee to continue her involvement in the work of MEC.

Board Member Heidi St. Peter is the Dean of Student Engagement at St. Michael's College in Colchester, Vermont, and developed a love for this special place through retreat experiences with close friends. As a former Board member of Mercy Connections, she is delighted to be part of this Mercy ministry.



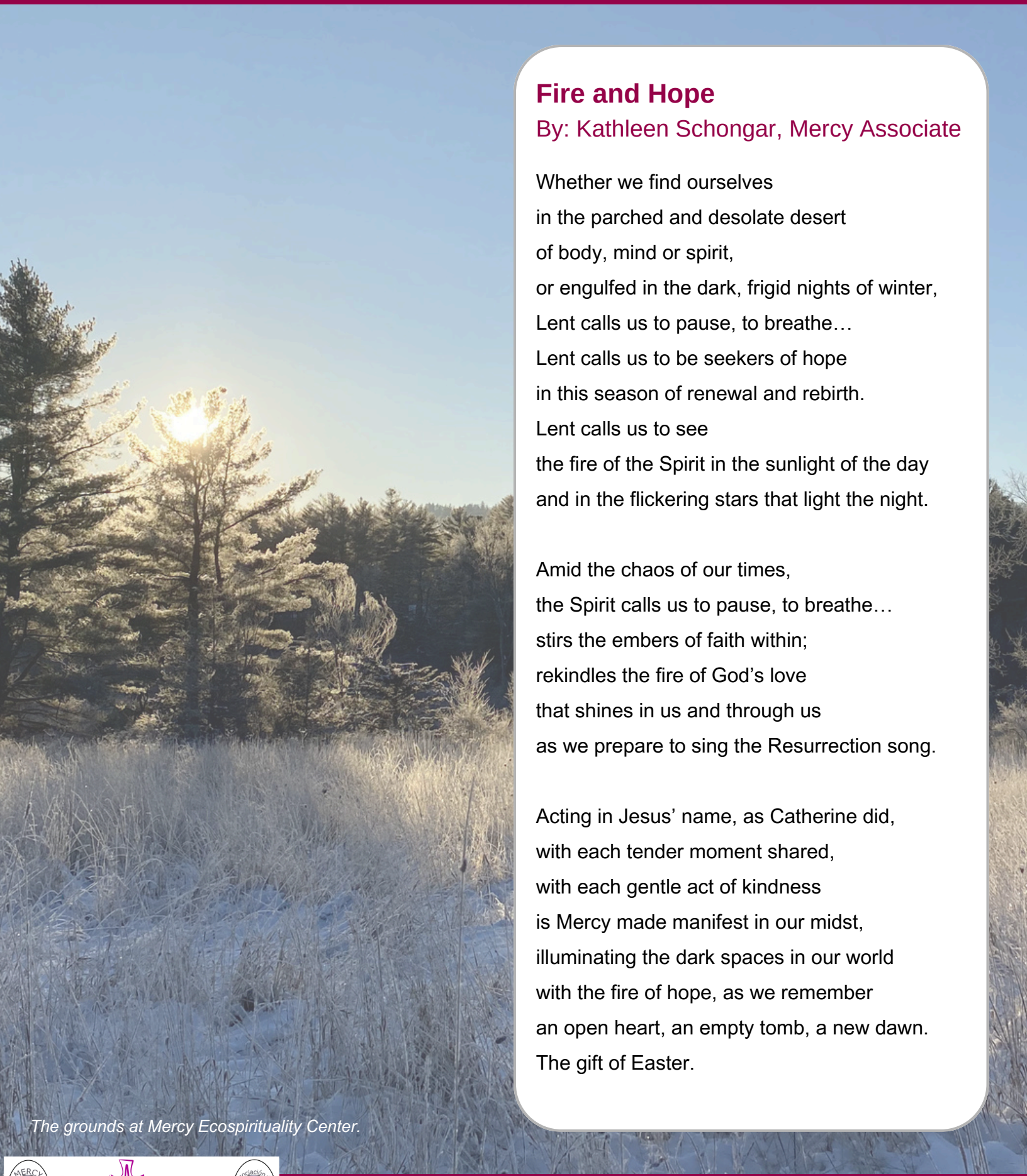
The grounds at Mercy Ecospirituality Center.

Associate Liz Reardon is Chair of the Development Committee on the Board of Trustees and is using her skills in grant writing to obtain funding opportunities. Liz loves going to the center whenever possible for quiet reflection and has plans to offer workshop retreats that connect nature, ecospirituality, and the creative arts.

As a Mercy Associate, I see my current role as Chair of the Board as a ministry, challenge, and an opportunity. I am thrilled to have so many dedicated fellow-Associates working together to ensure the vitality and fiscal sustainability of the MEC. We also enjoy the benefits of spiritual refreshment each time we enter the grounds of this special place.

For more information on programs or to arrange a visit, visit our website at MercyEcology.org.

A Poem for Lent



Fire and Hope

By: Kathleen Schongar, Mercy Associate

Whether we find ourselves
in the parched and desolate desert
of body, mind or spirit,
or engulfed in the dark, frigid nights of winter,
Lent calls us to pause, to breathe…
Lent calls us to be seekers of hope
in this season of renewal and rebirth.
Lent calls us to see
the fire of the Spirit in the sunlight of the day
and in the flickering stars that light the night.

Amid the chaos of our times,
the Spirit calls us to pause, to breathe…
stirs the embers of faith within;
rekindles the fire of God's love
that shines in us and through us
as we prepare to sing the Resurrection song.

Acting in Jesus' name, as Catherine did,
with each tender moment shared,
with each gentle act of kindness
is Mercy made manifest in our midst,
illuminating the dark spaces in our world
with the fire of hope, as we remember
an open heart, an empty tomb, a new dawn.
The gift of Easter.

The grounds at Mercy Ecospirituality Center.

We welcome our new Associates

December 2025 - February 2026

December 2025

12/8 - Lisa Therese Tarala, Connecticut, USA
12/8 - Elizabeth Anne Coyne, Connecticut, USA
12/10 - Rachel Kinnan Dear, Mississippi, USA
12/10 - Kristin Magee Doherty, Mississippi, USA
12/10 - Margaret Z. Smith, Mississippi, USA
12/12 - Carolyn Florkiewicz, Alabama, USA
12/12 - Tracy J. Gillespie, Alabama, USA
12/21 - Amy Leigh Allen, Pennsylvania, USA
12/21 - Todd Michael Cian, Pennsylvania, USA
12/21 - Theresa Colleen Doerfler, Pennsylvania, USA
12/21 - Mary Louise Hollender, Pennsylvania, USA
12/21 - Mary Anne Koleny, Pennsylvania, USA

January 2026

1/10 - Yolanda Marie Pickup, New Mexico, USA

In Memory of our Associates

December 2025 - February 2026

December 2025

12/1 - Jennifer Wright-Blackmon, Pennsylvania, USA
12/3 - Cherry Ricafrente, California, USA
12/13 - Rosemary Hoyt, New York, USA
12/14 - Barbara Warner, Ohio, USA
12/15 - Dorothy Phillips, New York, USA
12/20 - Rita McShea, Missouri, USA
12/22 - Margaret Dean, New York, USA
12/22 - Cecilia Farrell, Michigan, USA
12/22 - Joan Ryan, California, USA

January 2026

1/19 - Allene Kraus, Pennsylvania, USA

February 2026

2/2 - Al Sattler, Iowa, USA
2/14 - Barbara Vinton, Michigan, USA
2/25 - Mauvette O'Dowd, Pennsylvania, USA



Let us pray for all people facing violence & injustice.

PRAYER FOR ASSOCIATION



Thank you to our contributors in this issue:

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Do you have a suggestion for our newsletter? Leave us a message below:

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