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# Newsbulletin Special Newsbulletin, September 1986

Salve Regina College

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SALVE REGINA



THE NEWPORT COLLEGE

# NEWSBULLETIN

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SPECIAL NEWSBULLETIN

SALVE TO CELEBRATE SPIRIT OF MERCY

MERCY DAY, SEPTEMBER 24

Every year since its beginning, the Salve Regina College community celebrates Mercy Day with joy and gratitude for God's many gifts. On September 24, the spirit of mercy, which permeates the history and traditions of the Sisters of Mercy who founded Salve Regina College and continue that spirit as an abiding legacy to the college, is especially celebrated.

Mercy Day Liturgies:    8:00 a.m.  
                                     12:05 p.m.

Ochre Court Chapel



SISTERS OF MERCY

For Catherine McAuley, born in Dublin, Ireland in 1778, the streets of Dublin provided abundant opportunity to become a good Samaritan. As members of the "ascendancy class" rode by in horse-drawn carriages, Catherine observed the thin, hungry, poorly clad Irish children who did not attend school. She knew some of those children and their parents often had inadequate spiritual and physical care when they were sick and dying. Of concern to her, also, were the number of young women who came to Dublin from other parts of Ireland in order to seek work; frequently those young women had unsafe, inadequate, or no housing. Catherine longed to help all those in need.

This longing approached fulfillment in 1822. William Callahan died and willed Catherine his fortune. Overnight Catherine McAuley became a wealthy heiress. She determined that all the money would be spent on providing for the needs of the poor, the sick, and those who needed education on any level. She opened elementary schools for poor children and secondary schools for the middle classes where technical or vocational training accompanied instruction in the arts and sciences. Inability to pay was never a barrier to admission. Even before the Irish government opened their training school for teachers, Catherine sent out well qualified and well prepared teachers from her center for higher education. Catherine visited the sick in their homes and in the hospitals. She opened a resident home for young working girls.

Soon other women joined Catherine in the spiritual and corporal works of mercy which they witnessed her doing. Thus the seed of mercy, planted by God in one generous, compassionate Irish woman, began to flourish. The women who shared Catherine's spirit and activity began to pray together, to work together, and eventually to live together. In time, by God's providence, these women became the first Sisters of Mercy. They made a vow of service to God; they dedicated themselves to the poor, the sick, those who needed education, and to whatever work of mercy elicited their attention at that time.

As other women realized the transformation Catherine and the early Sisters of Mercy accomplished in Ireland in the schools, hospitals, and homes for working girls, they wanted to join in their noble work. Rapid increase in Mercy vocations enabled Catherine to send sisters throughout Ireland, to England, Newfoundland, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and to the whole English speaking world. In each continent Mercy Sisters opened centers of higher education.

In 1843 Sister Frances Warde, Catherine McAuley's greatest missionary, came to Pittsburgh where the first Mercy foundation was established in the United States. From that humble beginning Mercy spread to every state and eventually to the Spanish speaking countries of Central and South America.

The first Catholic high school for girls in Rhode Island, staffed by the Sisters of Mercy, opened its doors in 1851. Soon afterwards Mercy extended into all areas of education, to health care, and to allied social services in the State of Rhode Island.



## SALVE REGINA COLLEGE

With a vision to the future, the Sisters of Mercy in Rhode Island obtained a charter for a college in 1934. Thirteen years later on Mercy Day, September 24, 1947, the first class of fifty-eight Salve Regina students began another chapter of Mercy education.

The magnificent Ochre Court mansion, donated to Salve Regina College for "cultural and intellectual pursuits," constituted the entire college campus for one year. There the spirit of mercy dug deep roots in the small college community.

Today, Salve Regina College has over 35 Sisters of Mercy in key administrative positions as well as on faculty and staff. The campus has expanded to include mansions and buildings of architectural and historical significance, located on 65 beautiful, oceanfront acres. With a student enrollment of 2,000 men and women, the College now offers forty undergraduate majors and master's degrees in nine concentrations.

## THE CALL TO MERCY

Scripture asserts that the Lord has mercy on all (Wis. 11:23; Sir. 18:11) and that God's "mercy endures forever" (Pss. 136; 118). Without a doubt the will of God is clear: "It is mercy I desire, not sacrifice" (Hos. 6:6; Mt. 9:13; 12:7; 23:23). Jesus assures us further that those who are merciful to others are blest for they shall receive mercy from their Creator (Mt. 5:7).

Mercy is an attribute of both God and a good human person. In God mercy reaches out to save the sinner though he/she is without merits or rights. In the good human person mercy reaches out to anyone in need but especially to those in greatest need. Jesus offered the example of the Good Samaritan as one who "showed mercy" to the man he found half dead on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho (Lk. 10:37).

The spirit of Mercy challenges every student, every member of the staff, faculty, and administration to be merciful to every other human person but especially to the most needy, the deprived, and the oppressed. September 24, Mercy Day 1986, calls over 2,000 Salve Regina students and every individual at Salve Regina to incarnate mercy, to be mercy, to enfold the world with mercy so that wherever someone from Salve Regina goes there also will be mercy.

The regular bi-weekly Newsbulletin will be published on Thursday, September 25 as scheduled.

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