

Mercy Colleges and Universities – contributing to Mercy in the world through higher education.
Global Mercy see: [Mercy International Association \(MIA\) in Dublin, Ireland.](#)

As a Mercy College or University, who and what inspire us?

What principles and bodies of thought help stir our imaginations, challenge our creativity, deepen our questions, conversations, reflections, and engage us in moral decision making and methods of learning as we live our Mission?

Charism of Mercy – A gift and expression of God’s presence in the world

In 1827 **Catherine McAuley** opened the first House of Mercy on Baggot Street in Dublin, Ireland in response to the needs of poor women and children. In 1831 she founded the religious community of the Sisters of Mercy as a way to assure that this work would go forward. Her vision was to provide education, skill development, safety, health care and support to those with few options. Catherine McAuley died in 1841, leaving a community with convents and ministries in Ireland and England, and with nascent invitations to go to other lands. -- Catherine’s history is one of joys and sorrows, deep prayer and faith, and respectful, warm relationships in her leadership and fostering of community. In addition, she trusted in the wisdom of others to lead in Mercy wherever they are planted.

The **Sisters of Mercy** of the Institute of the Americas sponsor Mercy colleges and universities through the work of the **Conference for Mercy Higher Education** (CMHE). Their spirituality, charism, history and ongoing presence and ministry as a Roman Catholic religious group of women inspires the character, vision, and mission of Mercy higher education institutions and their communities at all levels.

The agreement and relationship between the Institute and each college or university is described as a **Covenant**.

The Covenant speaks of the desire and commitment to carry on the mission of higher education as a Mercy Catholic institution and to CMHE’s commitment to support their mission and identity in the context of each college or university’s distinct culture and location.

The Constitutions of the Sisters of Mercy regarding institutional sponsorship contextualize the spirit of this Covenant in their Mercy community Constitution:

“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 our co-workers and those we serve, endeavor to model mercy and justice and to promote systemic change according to these ideals.”
(Constitutions 5)

The Catholic Church’s Tradition, culture and documents, such as **Ex corde ecclesiae**, issued by Saint John Paul II, and **Core Principles of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition** contextualize and inform our identity and mission. -- Mercy colleges and universities drink from the well of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition (CIT).

--CIT is accumulated wisdom of the past and contemporary scholarship across all disciplines, studied in ways that encourages dealing with life’s challenges and questions with a sense of the Transcendent, the belief that creation is good and beautiful, and that humans are called to participate and contribute to this evolving goodness and beauty.

--CIT supports a rigorous search for truth, asserting that coming to know truth, at least very good approximations of truth, is possible and to be respected. It supports a lively, dynamic relationship between reason and faith, because reason alone is not complete, and faith without reason can be superficial. Today, CIT

represents an integrated approach to learning that values inclusiveness and diversity in a pluralistic world, with respectful dialogue that goes across disciplines and activities, even engaging in critical critique of itself. Philosophy, theology, and Mission content, questions and processes can act to facilitate a lively relationship between reason and faith. -- One does not have to be Catholic to appreciate CIT and to contribute to the dialogue. In fact, this participation makes it all the richer. CIT is a means to seek truth together.

Core Principles of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition as listed by the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities:

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| 1. A Commitment to Universal Truth | 6. The Power of Beauty |
| 2. Faith and Reason | 7. An Appreciation of Creation |
| 3. Integral Relationship to the Catholic Church | 8. The Dignity of the Human Person |
| 4. Hospitality and Tradition | 9. Innovation for the Common Good |
| 5. A Sacramental Vision | |

The Catholic Intellectual Tradition (CIT) affirms and appreciates:

- **Transcendancy** - broad horizon that calls us forward.
- **Sacramental Vision** – dynamic inter-relatedness of life, whose meaning and beauty can never fully be captured.
- **All Creation is good** - humans are inherently good, though we sin, personally and collectively.
- **Community** - essential at all levels, constantly forming and reforming.
- Christian story of the **Paschal Mystery** and how we might see the world and ourselves in and through this story.
- **Seeks truth and meaning** through reason & faith, all disciplines, traditions, and our experiences, questions and doubts.
- **Ethical systems of thought** ask “how should we act and why?” – Guiding Principles of **Catholic Social Teaching (CST)**.
- Sense of **Vocation in life** to be about the common good in the world in ways that are just and values key qualities of **beauty**.

Principles of Catholic Social Teaching (CST)

Principles of Catholic Social Teaching are active in decision-making processes. Within CIT, diverse ethical systems of thought come into dialogue, engaging Philosophical and Theological theories and principles, including Principles of CST. The list of principles is sometimes listed slightly differently.

- Life and Dignity of the Human Person
 - Call to Family, Community, and Participation
 - Common Good
 - Subsidiarity
 - Rights and Responsibilities
 - Preferential Option for the Poor and Marginalized
 - Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers
 - Solidarity
 - Care for Creation
- See also: *Just War Theory*



Mercy Critical Concerns

Non-violence

Earth

Women and those who are marginalized

Immigration and Migration

Anti-Racism

How would you re-word the Works of Mercy, mindful of the need for systemic responses to suffering and injustice?
Works of Mercy are a means of grace, ways to love our neighbor in light of the Gospels?
(Matt. 5:3-12 & Luke 6:20-22)

Corporal Works of Mercy (traditional wording)

- Feed the hungry
- Give drink to the thirsty
- Shelter the homeless
- Clothe the naked
- Visit the imprisoned
- Visit the Sick
- Bury the dead
- Care for the Earth (added by Pope Francis)

Spiritual Works of Mercy (traditional wording)

- Counsel the doubtful
- educate the ignorant
- Convert the sinner
- Comfort the sorrowful
- Forgive offenses willingly
- Bear wrongs willingly
- Pray for the living & the dead
- Care for the Earth (added by Pope Francis)

Some Common Focus Areas and Characteristics of a Mercy College / University

Focus on Mission	Future	Mercy Justice	Discernment	Learning & Discovery
Collaboration	Relationality	Systemic Just Laws	Faith	Beauty
Hospitality	Excellence	and Policies	Dignity & Respect	Joy
Compassion / Action	Humility that Stands	Prayer	Seeking Truth	Simplicity
Holistic Approaches	Up	Reflection	Questions	Perseverance ...

Mission Questions to consider :

1. What principles guide you in living Mercy? Who are the people who inspire you to be your best “you” and how so? How do you inspire others?
2. How do you and your department live the value of hospitality for students, colleagues, and visitors?
3. How are you and your department living the value of collaboration among peers and across campus divisions?
4. How do you lead by Mercy example when working with contract services and other outside partners?
5. When decisions are made, are you mindful of who will benefit, who will not, as well as who will carry the work of that decision or action?
6. How attentive are you to a diversity of voices in your area of work? Are you knowledgeable and sensitized to the complexities of biases, prejudices, and racism and able to listen, learn, speak-up, and change your behavior when mercy and justice call for this?
7. What does awareness of the Mercy Critical Concerns call forth from you and your department?
8. Given present constraints, opportunities, and learnings, what would make us more aligned with Mission?