

McAuley: 'We can never say it is enough'

When Renee Kettering entered the community of the Sisters of Mercy in Farmington Hills this August, she became part of a long tradition of Mercy.

On Sept. 24, 1827, on the feast of Our Lady of Mercy, Catherine McAuley used her inheritance to open the first House of Mercy on Baggot Street in Ireland.

That house, a school for poor girls and a shelter for homeless servant girls and women, marked the beginning of a ministry of service to the poor and uneducated with a focus on women and children that now spans the globe through the work of the Sisters of Mercy, the religious order she founded.

Catherine continues to attract women like Renee to her mission, but many have joined in her compassionate work. This week, in the Detroit area and in communities around the world, hundreds of celebrations are being held, not only by our sisters, but by Mercy associates, companions, staff, friends, alumni and the many others who are connected to Mercy through the numerous educational institutions, healthcare systems and providers, housing organizations and individual ministries that our sisters have founded, sponsored and are actively engaged in.

We continue to have a vibrant presence in Farmington Hills and the Detroit area where Sisters of Mercy have been since 1940. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the McAuley Center, which is our retirement community in Farmington Hills. We are proud of the compassionate assisted living and nursing care we provide to our sisters and the seniors who live with us. For those who know the Sisters of Mercy, there's no surprise that spirituality and hospitality go hand-in-hand as we nurture our residents at this stage in their lives and keep Catherine's legacy alive.

cities and across the globe. By coming together, however, we are taking time to focus on our lives as sisters and contemplate what it means to be a Sister of Mercy today and how do we continue to minister in the charism of Catherine McAuley. This change has enabled us to be more strategic about effectively using our resources.

Our ministry calls us to be part of the dialogue that's happening locally and nationally around our critical concerns of education, poverty, women's issues, racism, the environment, ending violence and immigration. Mercy Sisters wrestle with how to tackle these significant issues that we face as a country and world.

At the same time, we realize how important it is to continue our ministries to the poor and uneducated, particularly during this current economic climate and we're thankful that we can continue to help with programs and services that reach out and touch people who need it the most.

We deeply appreciate their many partners in ministry who are responding to God's call to bring mercy to the people of Detroit and to our world. These partners include Mercy Associates, Companions in Mercy and Mercy Volunteers - lay women and men who make formal commitments to the mission of mercy in their work, prayer and lives - and the tens of thousands of persons who work in Mercy-affiliated health care organizations, educational institutions and other ministries as well as benefactors, members of local parishes, government officials with whom they work, and the business community who have assisted us spiritually and financially for years.

We're thankful also that we're able to help, particularly in this current economic climate, when the call for assistance is even stronger. We are pleased

This Mercy Day, we have a lot to celebrate. In July, we completed our first year as the Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community, which is made up of the former regional communities of Detroit, Chicago, Ill., Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Omaha, Neb., Burlingame, Calif. and Auburn, Calif.

Our new community now includes more than 800 sisters, 500 Mercy Associates and 300 staff who live and minister in dozens of U.S.

that with everyone's help, it is possible to answer that call both with programs and services, as well as working at a national level for policy change.

So, in the words of Catherine McAuley, we are called to continue her zeal for ministering to the less fortunate: "We can never say 'it is enough'."

Sister Judith Frikker, RSM,
on behalf of the West Midwest
Community Leadership Team.