

Gift of Materials: Catherine McAuley and the Mission of Mercy



Mercy International Association is delighted to announce a gift of materials for two valuable artefacts from the Provincial Heritage Centre, Charleville, Co. Cork, Ireland.

This generous heritage donation from the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy, Southern Province, will feature in Mercy International Association's new heritage exhibition, *Catherine McAuley and the Mission of Mercy* later in the year.

The gift of materials includes a framed picture of the Crucifixion, presented by Catherine McAuley to Mother Mary Angela Dunne, Foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, Charleville, Co. Cork, in 1836 on a temporary loan of five years.

In addition, Mercy International Association has received a traditional religious habit of the Sisters of Mercy worn up to Vatican 2. This habit was donated to the Provincial Heritage Centre, Charleville, by the late Sr. Marcella Barry, Convent of Mercy Cobh, on August 5, 2005.

Sr. Bernadette Maria Knopek, the Curator of the Sisters of Mercy Heritage Centre in Charleville, said:

“The Provincial Heritage Centre in Charleville is delighted to offer Mercy International Association's new exhibition space this valuable artefact on temporary loan. It is important to celebrate our shared heritage and tell the stories of the inspirational women who came before us.”

The oral story suggests Catherine brought the painting to Mother Angela Dunne when she came to Charleville to lay the foundation stone for the convent. It is said the painting was carried in a jute sack with straw for protection. These sacks were traditionally used for storing potatoes and were made of a coarse cloth. It is said that Angela was finding life very difficult, and Catherine advised Angela to look at the Crucified Lord and to remember all he suffered. Catherine believed Angela would get strength from this.

According to the archives in Charleville, there is an undated entry at the end of the old book of annals, which was done in calligraphy. This painting is one of the community's most cherished items.

Commenting on the deed of gift, Sr. Patricia O'Donovan said:

“It has been a great privilege working with Mercy convents around the world on our loan of materials project. Mercy International Association is grateful to the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy, Southern Province, for their generous support. We are immensely privileged to be able to display these valuable heritage items to visitors to Mercy International Centre.”

Mercy International Association's new heritage exhibition *Catherine McAuley and the Mission of Mercy* will be open in the summer of 2024.

