

FOUNDATION DAY

December 12, 1831

The Mercy Community begins
Foundation Day: December 12, 1831

The story of the Religious Sisters of Mercy (RSM) began in Ireland on December 12, 1831 when Catherine McAuley and two of her companions—Mary Ann Doyle, and Elizabeth Harley professed their vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience as the first Sisters of Mercy. The Congregation was founded to educate women in practical jobs and to take care of the sick and poor. Catherine wore a plain band of silver on her left hand and the words inscribed were, "Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam" translated "to the greater glory of God" and "Fiat Voluntas Tua" or "thy will be done".

Inspired by these founding women, the Sisters of Mercy and their partners in ministry continue to carry out the spiritual and corporal works of mercy to those in need. The work of social justice is of particular concern to those who follow the spirituality and way of Mercy. There are hundreds of Catholic institutions that have been founded by the Sisters of Mercy to perpetuate the works of mercy to which Catherine McAuley gave her life. These schools, shelters, hospitals, nursing homes, and health care clinics are often purposefully situated in economically deprived neighborhoods to bring services to those who need it the most.

On Foundation Day, let us celebrate the beginning of our shared Mercy heritage and join together in bringing compassion, justice, hope, peace, and courage to everyone we meet.

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