

Racism And Interculturality

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The topic, racism and interculturality, invites me to dig deep. Today we are living at a time when words matter!

All across the globe, we are witnessing how words cause damage. They stoke antagonism and keep people paralysed in opposition to each other. Words generate a constant shift of political paradigms and words create turmoil.

I was born in Derry, on the northern part of the island of Ireland. It was here that I first encountered the Sisters of Mercy who had come to Derry in 1848. Our Foundress was Mary Ann Doyle, Catherine McAuley's companion. *"It started with two - Sister Doyle and I."*

I taught for over 20 years in Derry before assuming the role as Director of our Mercy Global office at the United Nations. I am an adviser to UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund, formerly United Nations International Emergency Fund) with the specific role of forming partnerships between UNICEF and women religious. I serve as a trustee with ARISE, the anti-slavery and human trafficking organisation based in London and New York. I am one of the co-ordinators of the NGO (Non-Governmental Organisation) - The Mercy Girl Effect.

When I received the invitation to write, I wondered if I should venture into these murky waters. The theme is especially difficult in the world we currently inhabit, where structural exclusion seems to be the order of the day and nationalistic tendencies seem to have eroded the concept of the common good. The topic, Racism and Interculturality, poses a major challenge to that ever-old, ever-new question:

"Who Then is my Neighbour?"

Coming as I do from a story-telling nation, I will weave my way around this very challenging topic, using the stories of two significant teachers in my life.

One was President Nelson Mandela, former President of South Africa. As a young teacher, I knew about the apartheid policies in South Africa because my younger brother Don was an advocate for workers in the "*Dunnes Stores Strikes*" in Ireland, a project to educate customers at the checkout about the reasons for boycotting South African produce.

Mr Mandela was born on 18th July, 1918 in the small village of Mvezo, on the banks of the Mbashe River, in the Eastern Cape of South Africa, as the First World War was entering its final months. On the following day, 19th July, 1918, in the town of Derry, on the banks of the River Foyle, in the north western part of the island of Ireland, my father, Charles Mullan, was born. One was an African baby with black skin, the other a European baby with white skin. Neither was born to hate the other. Both grew up in deeply divided societies.

Nelson Mandela suffered injustice because of the colour of his skin. Charles Mullan suffered injustice because of his cultural background and religion. Neither filled their children with hate; they both taught by example that another way was possible! Near the end of his autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, Nelson Mandela wrote the following:

*No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.*¹

President Mandela's autobiography is the powerful testimony of a man who refused to hate despite the lifetime of racial discrimination he suffered, culminating in 27 years of unjust imprisonment. Mandela emerged from prison, not calling for retribution and revenge, but proclaiming his hope for a 'rainbow nation' in which all the peoples of a new democratic South Africa would be cherished with the respect due to every human.

When Mr Mandela said, "*No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion,*" what did he mean? And what does it mean for us as Sisters of Mercy who belong to a diverse and international Congregation, drawing membership from 55 nation states?²

Yes, we are diverse. Yes, we have different ethnicities and national origins. Yes, we speak different languages, with different accents and dialects.³ Yes, we have different cultures and we have different ways of expressing our understanding of God and the source of our creation. But does that make us different? So different that some choose to consider their colour, culture, gender or spirituality to be more 'pure,' 'true,' 'superior' or 'normative'?

The Mercy Global Family forms a very small part of a more than 7 billion composing the global human family. In our family, some of us are intellectually more gifted, some of us are physically more powerful, some are economically more powerful, and some richer in cultural appreciation. Does that give us the right, either as individuals or collectively, to consider ourselves superior to others?

What Does Democracy Mean?

As countries across the globe become more focused on their nationalist interests, we wonder what democracy actually means? In this country (USA), and indeed in my own country (Ireland), the notion of democracy has many interpretations. In many countries, democracy and the privileges it brings have been largely reserved for white people through the intentional exclusion and oppression of people of colour. The deep racial and ethnic inequities that exist today in the USA are a direct result of structural racism that has led to the historical and contemporary policies, practices and norms that create and maintain white supremacy. Racism is both an American problem and a global problem. It is not a problem for black people to solve.

One description of racism as an American problem has been developed by Steven O. Roberts and Michael T. Rizzo in a paper they published in 2020 by the American Psychological Association. These researchers identified seven factors that contribute to American racism in particular. These factors are:

- Categories
- Factions
- Segregation
- Hierarchy
- Power
- Media
- Passivism

In the course of my discussion, I will use examples from both my personal life and what I have witnessed and experienced as a new citizen of this country.

Categories

'Categories' describes a system, which organises people into distinct groups based on essentialist and normative reasoning. Individuals do not only learn about categories; they are embedded within us. I became aware of the concept of embedded categorisation when I worked with a group of Catholic and Protestant young people (all white) in the north of Ireland during the '*Irish Troubles*'. In an effort to promote mutual understanding, we used the medium of creative dance. The embedded perceptions about the '*other*' which emerged were both alarming and challenging. Most of the group had never actually interacted with persons from the other group, yet their perception of differences was deeply embedded. This was very troubling in people so young.

Factions

When people find themselves divided into factions, their behaviour is controlled by in-group loyalties, along with inter-group competition. People's positive perceptions of themselves get extended to positive identification of their group. They are conditioned to prefer association with other people like themselves.

Because people care about co-operative alliances, they intuitively interpret the groups that they are assigned to as requiring their co-operation and trust, which leads to behaving in ways that benefit the in-group. Again, this was highly visible during the '*Dance of Co-Existence*', the exercise mentioned above, when the teenagers displayed group loyalty. In-group loyalty and factionalism is currently playing out in the US Congress, where truth and facts are being sacrificed for in-group loyalty.

Segregation

In the US and across the globe, racial segregation is pervasive at macro and micro levels. Segregation hardens racist perceptions and beliefs through the denial of intergroup contact. In the USA, because White Americans have historically constituted a numerical majority and occupied most positions of power, they have been able to establish societal norms. These include such norms as which accents are considered standard and who assumes what official positions in political elections. The fact that this numerical majority will be eroded by 2042, when Americans of colour are projected to make up a majority of the US population, is causing many White Americans to feel that their status is under threat, causing greater pro-White bias and support for extremist political candidates.

This was especially evident in the past four years during the Trump administration. While the 45th President of the United States did not cause American racism, his authoritarian, divisive, hierarchy-reinforcing, and racially prejudiced statements certainly contributed to a re-empowerment of White supremacists. A blatant example of this was when Trump proposed that the US accept more people from countries like Norway, a predominantly White nation and fewer people from countries like Haiti, a predominantly Black-Latino nation, which he referred to as a '*shithole*'.⁴

In the same manner, a Unionist-controlled (Britain-sympathetic) government in Northern Ireland reinforced segregation between Catholic and Protestant peoples through a process of gerrymandering of electoral voting wards. This resulted in a majority-Catholic population in my home city of Derry, also called Londonderry, being denied voting rights, decent housing and jobs. As a Catholic man, my father, Charles Mullan, had no right to vote until 1969.

Hierarchy

Hierarchical organisation of peoples emboldens some to behave in racist ways. As children growing up in Ireland, we looked to America as the land of possibilities. I think our ideas were in part formulated by my American grandmother, born in Philadelphia, who storied all her 37 grandchildren with grandiose tales of life in the USA. The truth of the matter was that her parents had escaped the poverty and class bigotry of Ireland and emigrated to the USA to begin a new life. That life was short-

lived when my great-grandmother died giving birth to my grandmother's sister. Then two small American born children were returned to Ireland, where they remained for the rest of their lives. They never, however, lost the fairy tale that they belonged to a global hierarchy, or as my Grandma would tell us, the greatest country in the world!

Americans are bombarded with social ideologies that legitimate their right to a place at the top of the world. Some ideologies are subtle, like the myth which suggests that hard work breeds success, despite the fact that success is more attainable for some than for others. Individuals who subscribe to the Protestant work ethic are more likely to attribute hierarchies to dispositions (e.g. those at the top simply work harder than those at the bottom), rather than to biased social structures.

Another ideology is the depiction of God as White and male. In contemporary USA, God is often conceptualised as a White male, which among Black and White Americans, adults and children, predicts evaluating White job candidates as particularly leadership-worthy. Americans are bombarded with social myths that assert that high status membership is earned by hard work, fixed at birth, and given by God who is assumed to be White. As the first black President, Barack Obama often worked under that old, unspoken pressure that can still freeze a black student at a predominantly White school – one must be twice as good in order to break even.

Power

Holding positions of power allows Whites to legislate racism on both micro and macro levels. Because White Americans have historically constituted a numerical majority and occupied most positions of power, they have been able to establish societal norms. Thus, white supremacy is deeply and intricately woven into the fabric of US society. At the micro level, parents influence much of their children's lives, and children are particularly sensitive to what authority figures do and say when determining what is or is not appropriate. Examples playing out at present suggest that parents who exercise a high degree of control are more likely to have children who trust authority figures. This is relevant in understanding the dynamics of movements like Black Lives Matter and Support the Blue.

That same perception was true when I was growing up in Northern Ireland where the majority of the police force was Protestant. As a child, I had a fear and distrust of the police. This fear and distrust were reinforced for me as a 16 year old girl, when I witnessed Catholic women and men marching for civil rights in 1969, being battered to the ground. Years later, that image deeply affected me when, as an adult, I was appointed by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to be part of a group looking at the under representation of women, Catholics and ethnic minorities in the police force. I was invited to a meeting at police headquarters in a very sectarian part of Northern Ireland. The environment was culturally oppressive, and I remember distinctly checking under my car in the police yard, to make sure a bomb had not been attached while I was inside at the meeting!

How parents talk about race matters. Racial socialisation is the process by which parents transmit their beliefs about race to their children, through implicit, explicit, intentional or accidental means. Some White parents tend to adopt a colour blind ideology, ostensibly believing that race does not matter and that conversations about race should be avoided. However, this leaves the observations and myths learned from the broader society unchallenged and reinforces the legitimacy of racial hierarchy. In contrast, parents of colour often speak with their children about historical and structural inequalities, and about how to deal with racial biases that they might encounter in the real world.

Simply put, American society teaches American citizens that whiteness is superior. While parents of colour often speak out against those lessons to prevent their children from internalising them, many White parents often remain silent about those lessons, allowing their children to internalise them.

Media

Media is the medium which legitimises overrepresented and idealised representations of the dominate group. That the media is both part of the problem and solution to the current race problem playing out in the USA is evident in the ethnicity of the newscasters. We have the CNN version of news in which racially diverse anchors speak to viewers, in contrast to the domination by White news anchors on Fox.

An article by John Amato, entitled 'Helping the West's adversaries seems to be the goal of Fox News and its parent company, NewsCorp', the author writes:

In an interview with the former Australian Prime Minister, Malcom Turnbull stated very clearly that right wing media mogul Rupert Murdoch has done more to divide and damage America with the help of Donald Trump than Russian President Vladimir Putin.

What does Vladimir Putin want to do with his operations in America? He wants to divide America and turn Americans against each other, said Turnbull at a parliamentary hearing in Sydney on media diversity. That is exactly what Murdoch has done: Divided Americans against each other and so undermined their faith in political institutions that a mob of thousands of people, many of them arms, stormed the Capitol.

Turnbull said that instead of appealing to the mainstream, media companies like Murdoch's thrive by cultivating the fringe.

*"Just reflect on the damage that Murdoch's publications and outlets (Fox News), particularly in the United States, have done to democracy there", Turnbull said. "I mean, the January 6th sacking of the US Capitol was one of the most terrible events in American history."*⁵

Over the first three years of Trumps presidency, nationwide hate crimes on the basis of race, religion, and sexual orientation all increased at a rapid rate, according to Pew Research. The messaging of the former President was a constant media circus. In the US, media is important. The average household has two televisions. The average citizen watches television for around 2.8 hours a day. Around 84% of US households own a computer and 77% of US citizens own a cell phone with internet access.

How the media portrays racial groups thus plays a pivotal role in reinforcing American racism. In a 2000 study conducted to look at how the media feeds racism, Dixon and Linz compared how often people were depicted as criminals and victims on television, in contrast to actual crime reports. They found that Black Americans were over represented as criminals and under represented as victims, whereas White Americans were under represented as criminals and over represented as victims. Viewers exposed to such portrayals are more likely to perceive Black people as criminals.⁶

Media has also been used as a powerful tool to depict immigrants as people who want to steal their way into the USA. Everyone coming into the USA is not a criminal!

My own experience testifies to this. In between the expiration of an R Visa (religious), and the reward of a Green Card to work as the Sisters of Mercy representative at the United Nations, I was pulled aside by US border control many times. At the top of his voice (It was usually a male officer), the border control person called out, "Alien on parole". Then two officers escorted me to a facility away from everyone else. While I was initially intimidated, when this happened several times, I became angry and watchful. The only alien I had ever met was the movie character ET, and now here I was at

a US border point being assigned a similar status! Most of the other people being held were people of African, Latino or Asian descent. Many had small children and were held in a crowded facility. One time, when I was questioned where I worked, the border patrol officer suggested I would do better in a grade school than in that useless place called the United Nations. I remained silent but noted his number and subsequently reported this harassment to the immigration authorities. I wondered how many other people fared, given my experience as a White, educated woman!

Passivism

Passivism, when people stand or look the other way when something morally wrong occurs, is a way of denying the existence of racism. Taking no action can encourage others to do the same, allowing racism and hatred to fester and persist. Perhaps the most insidious component of American racism is passive racism, which is best described as apathy toward systems of racial advantage, or denial that these systems actually exist.

This is a phenomenon not confined to the USA. The bystander/denier culture has long been alive and well across the globe. In my culture, the saying: “*Whatever you say – say NOTHING*”, was the mantra told to countless generations of Catholic youth as a way to avoid trouble, especially when confronted by the police.

Passivism or the ‘bystander effect’ is motivated by at least three factors:

- a) Diffusion of responsibility
- b) Fear that helping will elicit negative public judgement, or
- c) The belief that the situation must not really be an emergency if nobody else is helping!

I recall a moment in my life when I was a bystander. Once when returning from school, I noticed a crowd of people near the church. As I approached, I saw a young woman, who was tied to a lamp post and tarred and feathered. Her crime was that she was dating one of the British soldiers stationed in the army barracks in Derry. Her punishment was a reminder to all local girls to stay away from British soldiers. Her eyes met mine and, as I turned away, that image stayed with me for many years. A paralyzing fear was my motive for turning away. But while I may have turned away, her tied up body and frightened eyes visited me for many years.

The term xenophobia, which is often linked to racism, breeds fear and hatred of strangers or anything that is strange or foreign. While globalisation has brought us closer together interweaving our lives both nationally and internationally in complex and inextricable ways, a new wave of tribalism is also being birthing all across the globe. The September 11th attacks in New York marked a new and more sinister wave of fear of the stranger.

Small non-state groups, hard to identify, are capable of organising globally and wreaking havoc on a large scale. They have caused decades of regression in the effort to create an ethos of tolerance and respect. Driven by religious hatred or a particular ideology, they are willing to commit suicide bombings and embrace self-destruction as a religious act guaranteeing their entry into paradise. They make no distinction between combatant and non-combatant, innocent or guilty, involved or disengaged.

Religion and Politics

The openness of global societies and their interconnectedness reinforces their vulnerability to acts of political terrorism. The wars being waged by terrorists do not use conventional warfare methods. Religious ideology, political demands or economic motives are used to justify destructive attacks,

kidnappings, and mass murders. As a result, a new fear of *'the other'* has taken hold, both in this country and beyond. The politics of identity has replaced the politics of ideology. And identity divides. The very process creates an *"us"* and *"them"*.

Religion typically helps believers find meaning and make sense of what is happening. Globalisation can be experienced as profoundly destabilising. Faced with change, those who feel threatened can turn to religion as a source of stability, as expression of all things they presume do not change. The word *'religion'* comes from the Latin *religare*, meaning to bind. That is what religions did and still do. Religious faith binds people to God and to each other in communities. What religions have in common, especially in the case of the great monotheisms, is that they can create unities, systems, wholes. They bind faith communities together through shared texts, rituals, narratives, collective ceremonies, and symbols. Religions, as total systems of meaning, create totalities.

The great tragedy of WWII in the twentieth century happened when politics morphed into a religion, when a nation (in the case of Germany) embraced fascism as a religious-like cult of political identity. The single greatest risk we face in the twenty-first century is not that politics is religionised but rather when religion is politicised.

Biblical monotheism represents the development of the universal inclusive spirit – when humanity lifted its sights beyond the tribe, the city and the nation and thought of humanity as a whole. To this day, more than any other actor on the world stage, the great religions fulfil the imperative, *"Think globally and act locally."*

I have often seen this played out at the United Nations when the Holy See Mission challenges member states. Speaking to the special session called to combat Racism and Xenophobia held in New York on February 12th, 2021, H. E. Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, issued the following statement:

The equal dignity of each person requires us never to turn a blind eye to racism or exclusion but rather to turn to every person with openness, solidarity and love. The ongoing disease of racism is a virus that can quickly mutate. Instances of racism continue to shame us, for they show that our supposed social progress is not as real or definitive as we think.

We see that the evil of racism, xenophobia, and discrimination especially affects migrants and refugees. As Pope Francis stated in his encyclical letter Fratelli Tutti, "No one will ever openly deny that (they) are human beings, yet in practice, by our decisions and the way we treat them, we can show that we consider them less worthy, less important, less human." This is unacceptable.

Fear of the "other" (xenophobia) also causes much of the intolerance, violence and persecution suffered by an increasing number of people on the basis of their religion or belief. Disregard for the right to religious freedom, the "primary and fundamental human rights," has led to individual believers and groups being denied basic rights, imprisoned, tortured, and even murdered because of their faith while perpetrators enjoy impunity. Some religious minorities are even in danger of being entirely extinguished in certain regions, including Christians who represent the most persecuted group globally.

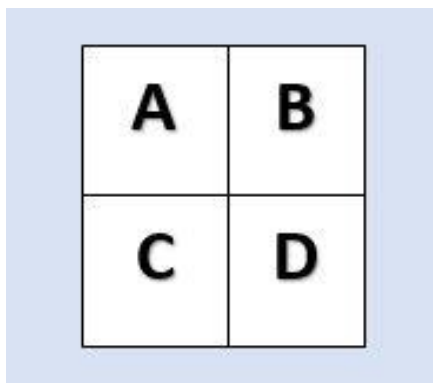
*The international community must together combat racism, xenophobia and discrimination, and the 'throw away' culture they reflect. Only true fraternity can overcome this illness. Pope Francis asserted during the commemoration of the International Day of Human Fraternity, in a very clear and unequivocal way, "There is no time for indifference – either we are brothers and sisters, or we destroy (one another)."*⁷

So the question remains: What is the way forward and how do we get there? As Jonathan Sacks expressed it:

It was one thing for Christians to fight each other in the age of the Crusades; it is quite another to do so in the age of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. It was one thing for wars to take place on a battlefield, another when anywhere – a plane, a bus, a hijacked delivery truck – can become the frontline of scene of terror.⁸

A lot has been written about multi-culturalism. By definition, multi-culturalism is about A, B, C and D cultures existing together in a location, separately. This has been the way for generations when ethnic groups lived together separately, as the following diagram demonstrates.

Multicultural

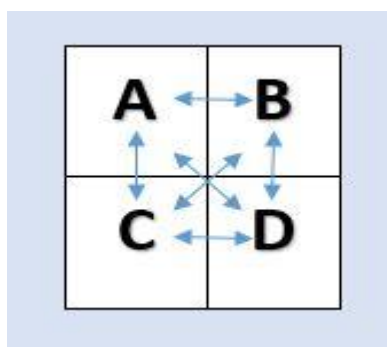


Is about different A, B, C, D cultures

- “existing” together in a location
- Living together separately
- The experience of
 - Ethnic groups
 - Parish communities
 - Families in neighbourhoods
 - Individuals in “Community”

The call to interculturality is a process whereby A, B, C, and D interact with each other through porous boundaries, as shown on the next diagram. While there is give and take, and some communication between groups, this is still not living intentionally in an intercultural way.

Interculturality: A Process



- Interactions of A, B, C and D with each other
- Porous boundaries
- Good relations, communications
- Give and take, accommodations
- Still not quite interculturality

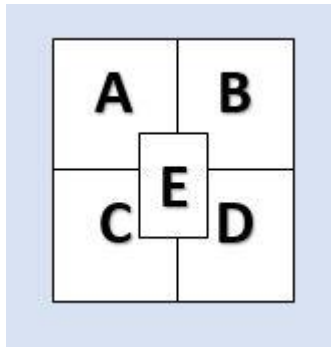
This interaction of A, B, C and D represents different cultures interacting and trying to live intentionally as an intercultural community/society.

A further process is required beyond that outlined in the diagram above. It is a new, intentional movement of going and coming towards. It is an unfamiliar place for everyone and requires sustained effort and commitment. There is no hierarchy. It is a call to conversion and a journey to the unknown.

In this new space, no one culture dominates the other. Interculturality is not a problem to be solved, but rather a movement to be embraced. It is a theological call to conversion and transformation. Such a call/movement requires constant commitment and is more than just good will.

Those committed to living this way must be open to vulnerability, open towards all ethnicities and appreciated of the dignity of difference.

In the ideal situation a new culture 'E' is created



- Nobody is entirely in a familiar environment
- All find an appropriate degree of fitness/being and insider or 'at home' in E
- Everyone is, paradoxically, also an outsider in E
- No hierarch, status, all are servants

Those who believe in the possibilities of interculturality must be prepared to change their attitudes and false presuppositions, recognising that they will encounter great resistance.

Is such an ideal possible in our deeply divided, racist and xenophobic world?

Until the late twentieth century, the prominent default position was ASSIMILATION. If you want to live in this county, you must live like us! The dominant culture made the rules and those coming from outside were meant to obey. Many of us who belong to religious congregations can acknowledge this experience. While the Second Vatican Council affirmed the richness of diversity, the dominant culture remained.

I can personally affirm this dichotomy. I come from the northern part of the island called Ireland. Our political, educational and health care systems are different from the rest of Ireland.

While we are a culturally rich northern people, I have encountered resistance as a northerner. For example, I have been elected to attend most of our Congregational Chapters for the Sisters of Mercy with seven provinces. The majority of membership is aligned to the Irish Republic. Nevertheless, I have often felt like an outsider and marginalised.

As the part of the world where I was born begins to fracture open again, I hear troubling comments from members who are misinformed about the reasons there is trouble again on the streets of Belfast and Derry. They are a reminder that misinformation can foster negative attitudes not grounded in a full account of the facts.

So, can we move beyond racism and xenophobia to a place where all are included? Pope Francis has invited each of us to go out intentionally and encounter others who are different from ourselves, reach out towards the fringes and peripheries and model inclusivity.

Intentional encounters have been articulated by Maria Cimperman, R.S.C.J., in her work on Social Analysis for the 21st Century. Cimperman identifies four layers of encounter:

- To stop and see another. It is more than a glance. Think about the people we glance at every day – women in burqas, British soldiers on the streets of Northern Ireland.
- To try and understand from the other's perspective. To be curious and ask questions, to wonder why rather than judge too quickly, to be open and peep inside, rather than being indifferent.
- To try to recognise the other and connect, by honouring and respecting the humanity of the individual, however culturally expressed.

- When we reach this layer, we will know that something within us has shifted. There will be a recognition within the self, of oneness with all.⁹

Fear is one of the greatest obstacles to such encounters and, as Samantha Power has reminded us so often, the greatest fear is fear itself!

Earth from the Perspective of Astronauts

In conclusion, perhaps we might consider widening our viewing tents and take a look at our world from the perspective of astronauts. Those who have had the privilege of gazing down upon the earth from space have commented on how unified the earth looks without human made political borders.

Our galaxy is but one of billions of galaxies across the Universe. And, if the 'Big Bang' theory marks the beginning of time, scientists calculate that the cosmos is still expanding and gathering speed.

With this perspective, we realise that, in fact, we are little more than tiny creatures in a fathomless existence. To look out is to look back into history, for the light that reaches our eyes from distant stars has, other than the sun, travelled longer than we have lived on earth. Such thoughts are awe-inspiring and should be humbling. They teach us that in the vast darkness within which we exist, those who believe themselves more intelligent and powerful and therefore, more entitled, are truly ignorant, lacking the understanding that should move us to compassion.

The cosmos teaches us that we are yet infants learning to walk, dipping our toes into the lapping waves of a vast ocean of knowledge beyond us. Catherine McAuley appreciated this when she said:

*How quietly the great God does all His mighty works! Darkness is spread over us, and light breaks in again and again, and there is no noise of drawing curtains or closing shutters.*¹⁰

Such thoughts, help us to realise that we have a great responsibility towards one another, to ensure that the miracle that is each one of us is cherished and given every opportunity to grow, irrespective of our skin pigmentation, social background or religious or secular beliefs. They help us to realise that perhaps our greatest endowment is the gift of consciousness, through which we can ponder and contemplate the great privilege of being.

Mercy Legacy

Catherine McAuley knew this and when she founded the Sisters of Mercy, envisioning a group of women who would serve and be served as part of the great community of life, recognising that we have a deep responsibility towards one another.

Mandela, too, had this deep sense of responsibility. When he was released from prison, he had the power to invoke an uprising that might have achieved the ultimate objective of black emancipation, but at a terrible price. Instead, he chose the path of peace and reconciliation, wishing to imagine a new South Africa in which the great rainbow of cultures, tribes and colours might offer hope to all humanity. That is his greatest legacy.

It is part of our sacred legacy too. Catherine McAuley, who lived many years before Nelson Mandela, understood this concept clearly. She inspired her early followers, "It is not sufficient that Jesus Christ be formed in us...He must be recognised in our conduct."¹¹

Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu promoted the concept of Ubuntu, a multi-layered word familiar to several South African languages, including their native Xhosa. Ubuntu emphasises the connectedness that does and must, exist between peoples. Archbishop Tutu described Ubuntu thus:

*A person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are.*¹²

The idea has been further developed by Dingle who says: *“A truly inclusive culture recognises that ‘a rising tide lifts all boats’ focusing on continually recruiting, promoting and retaining a diverse array of talent and, in the process, creating a rich culture of belonging.”*¹³

Let me conclude with two quotations, one from the great astronomer and cosmologist Carl Sagan:

*Every one of us is, in the cosmic perspective, precious. If a human disagrees with you, let him live. In a hundred billion galaxies, you will not find another.*¹⁴

And Catherine who challenged us:

*Try to act at all times and places that if the Lord were to appear, he would not be ashamed to point you out as one of his own.*¹⁵

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¹ Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom* (London: Little, Brown & Company, 1994)

² Deirdre Mullan, RSM, *The Many Faces of Mercy*, brochure produced by Mercy Global Concerns, April 2012

³ Deirdre Mullan, RSM, *Mercy: The Language of the Heart: UN International Year of Languages*, Brochure produced by Mercy Global Concerns, April 2008.

⁴ Unionist refers to the group who want to remain attached to mainland Britain as opposed the Republicans, who desire unity with the Irish Republic.

⁵ John Amato, Media Diversity Inquiry, Senate Inquiry, Australia, April 13th, 2021.

⁶ Travis Dixon and Daniel Linz, *Journal of Communications* Vol. 50, No. 2 (October, 2000) pp. 131 – 154.

⁷ H.E. Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, Apostolic Nuncio and Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, ECOSOC Special Meeting, “Reimagining Equality, Eliminating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination for all in the Decade of Action for the SDGs,” New York, 18th February, 2021.

⁸ Jonathan Sacks, *The Dignity of Difference* (New York: Continuum, 2002).

⁹ Maria Cimperman, R.S.C.J., *Social Analysis for the 21st Century: How Faith Becomes Action* (New York: Orbis Books, 2015).

¹⁰ Limerick Manuscript, in Mary C. Sullivan, *Catherine McAuley and the Tradition of Mercy*, (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995): 174

¹¹ Don Mullan, *The Little Book of Catherine of Dublin*, (Dublin, Ireland: A Little Book Company, 2005): 33

¹² Archbishop Desmond Tutu, “Event to Launch the Tutu Desk,” United Nations Headquarters, New York, April 2014

¹³ Jeffrey Dingle, Global Director of an inclusion and diversity strategy at Jacobs Engineering Group, BBC Podcast on Diversity, May 2021

¹⁴ Carl Sagan, *Cosmic Citizens, Cosmic Quotes by Carl Sagan*. Accessed at www.goodreads.com/author/quotes.

¹⁵ Don Mullan, *The Little Book of Catherine of Dublin*, p. 86