

WELCOME by Sr. Ann Brady

Good evening Sisters. I welcome all of you who will participate in our celebration this evening.

I welcome you from all areas of our Northern Province be it North, South, East or West.

A warm welcome to Sisters tuning in from overseas, those who are at present working or studying outside the country be it in England, France or the USA. Sisters joining us from our Mission Communities in Nigeria and Zambia you too are very welcome.

Dr. Marshall Rosenberg writes: *"Your presence is the most precious gift you can give to another human being"*. Thank you for your presence this evening.

We come to celebrate our **Identity**, our belonging and the many ways in which we belong in Mercy, in our local community in our evolving Universe.

We gather conscious of the far reaching effects of our **Interconnectedness**. To quote Hildegard of Bingen *"Everything that is in the heavens, on the earth and under the earth is penetrated with connectedness, penetrated with relatedness"*. In that relatedness we are conscious of the sufferings of war torn peoples, conscious of the plight of women and children being trafficked into our own country; conscious and grateful for the wonders of creation and the abundance of planet Earth.

We gather during our Lenten Season and having this week celebrated the Feast of St Patrick. At this time we rejoice in our Celtic roots and our Christian inheritance. We continue our **God Quest**, sharing our experiences of God, grateful for new knowledge and emerging insights, tolerant of our diverse understandings and conscious that the God of Mystery is far too extensive to be comprehended by one person or group, too vast for one dogma or doctrine.

We come at a time when we are seeking new ways of being together in **Mission**, our Mission continues whatever our personal our communal circumstances. We are in Mission by the very way we live and by how we are as Mercy women. Our desire is to be a hope-filled compassionate presence, awakening each day to the wonder and beauty of our world; responding to the invitation of Pope Francis that we warm the hearts of the people.

This evening's event is witness to the spirit of co-operation and **Participative Leadership** present in our Province. The commitment and hard work of members of our Core group in planning and co-ordinating this event is much appreciated and I would like to pay tribute to each one present here in Clogher and to Local Leaders, Area Group Leaders, Contact Persons who gathered Sisters together for conversation and participation this evening, and to each one who has made the effort to be part of this celebration.

Sr. Edel is co-ordinating our movements here this evening. Edel, our floor manager, will not appear on camera but her presence here is all important and much appreciated. We are grateful to Sr. Perpetua McNulty for composing music for the refrain: *'Weaver God'* which we will sing at intervals throughout the evening.

Now it is my pleasure to introduce Sr. Anne Murphy who will guide us through this evening's process.