



Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy Western Province



Trustees' Annual Report & Financial
Statements for the year ended
31st December 2022
Republic of Ireland

CONTENTS	Page
Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities	2
Annual Trustees' Report	
Introduction: The Beginnings of Sisters of Mercy and Mission Today	3
Mission	4
The Western Province Administrative Details	5
Public Benefit - Object of the Charity	7
Activities & Achievements	8
1. Congregational Living & Advancement of Religion	9
2. Healthcare & Compassionate Care of the Sick and those in Need	11
3. Relief of Poverty, Promotion of Education, Justice & other Charitable Activities	15
i. Promotion of all aspects of Education	15
ii. Justice, Peace & Reconciliation	17
iii. Overseas Development & Support	19
iv. Pastoral and Social Care & Development	19
v. Support of other Charities/Groups	20
vi. Involvement in Critical & Global Issues	20
4. Collaboration with and Support of Other Groups	21
5. Positive Impact Investment	22
6. Upkeep of Listed Assets	24
Financial Review	25
Structure, Governance & Management	28
Future Plans	34
Appendix 1	36
Independent Auditors' Report	
Statement of Financial Activities	
Balance Sheet	
Cash flow Statement	
Notes to the Financial Statements	



Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees present their Annual Report together with the Audited Financial Statements of The Provincial Leadership of the Sisters of Mercy Western Province (the "Provincial Leadership") for the year ended 31 December 2022. The Trustees of this Charity hold overall responsibility for the life and mission of the Western Province of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy.

Their role is to provide unity and Mercy Vision within the Province for Mission as well as having overall responsibility for Provincial assets.

They confirm that the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Western Province comply with current best practice, the requirements of the Constitution of The Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (Charities SORP FRS 102).

"Accounting and Reporting by Charities" issued in October 2019.

Approved on behalf of the Provincial Leadership Team:

Sr. Breege O'Neill, Provincial Leader



Introduction

The Beginnings of the Sisters of Mercy

The Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy is an international Roman Catholic Religious Congregation founded in 1831 by Catherine McAuley.



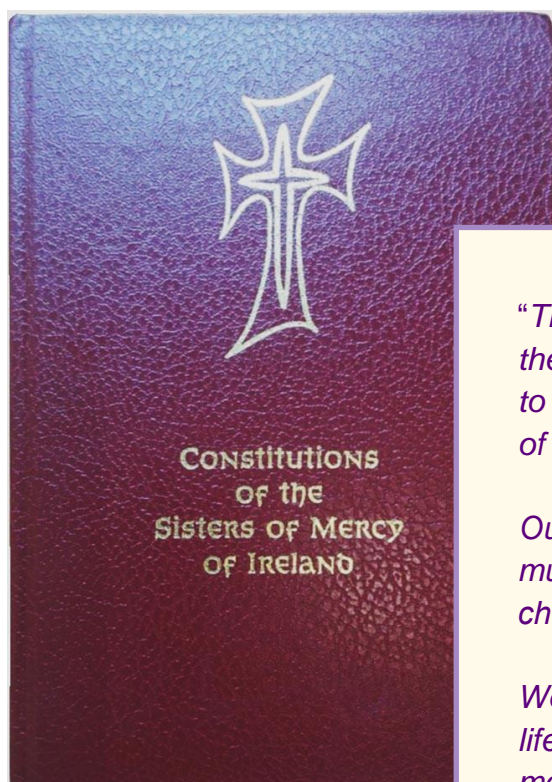
In 1827, Catherine, influenced by her Christian faith, used her inheritance to set up a centre in the then fashionable Baggot Street from which she and her early companions responded to the needs of people disadvantaged in society.

In the years that followed the Sisters of Mercy established communities in Ireland and overseas and cared in whatever way possible for the needs of the people who were poorest, setting up many schools that still exist in the Western Province as well as working in State healthcare institutions.



Our Mission Today

In recent decades, and as State provision in the areas of healthcare and education continued to improve, the work of Sisters became more varied. Motivated by the Christian vision of a world of equality, justice, peace and care of the earth, there has been a consistent effort to respond to unmet needs, to work for justice and to advocate for the voiceless. Sisters work with others, to acknowledge and restore people's relationship with the earth and the whole community of life, to promote sustainable living, as well as continuing in areas such as education, pastoral and healing work, addressing addiction, reconciliation and inclusion. Given the age profile of the Province with 52% of the Sisters over 80 years, there is an increasing need to focus on care for frail and infirm members, while resourcing others in keeping with the charism of Mercy.



"The mission of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy is to bear witness to the compassionate and merciful love of God.

Our administration of temporal goods must express the Gospel call to justice, charity and almsgiving...

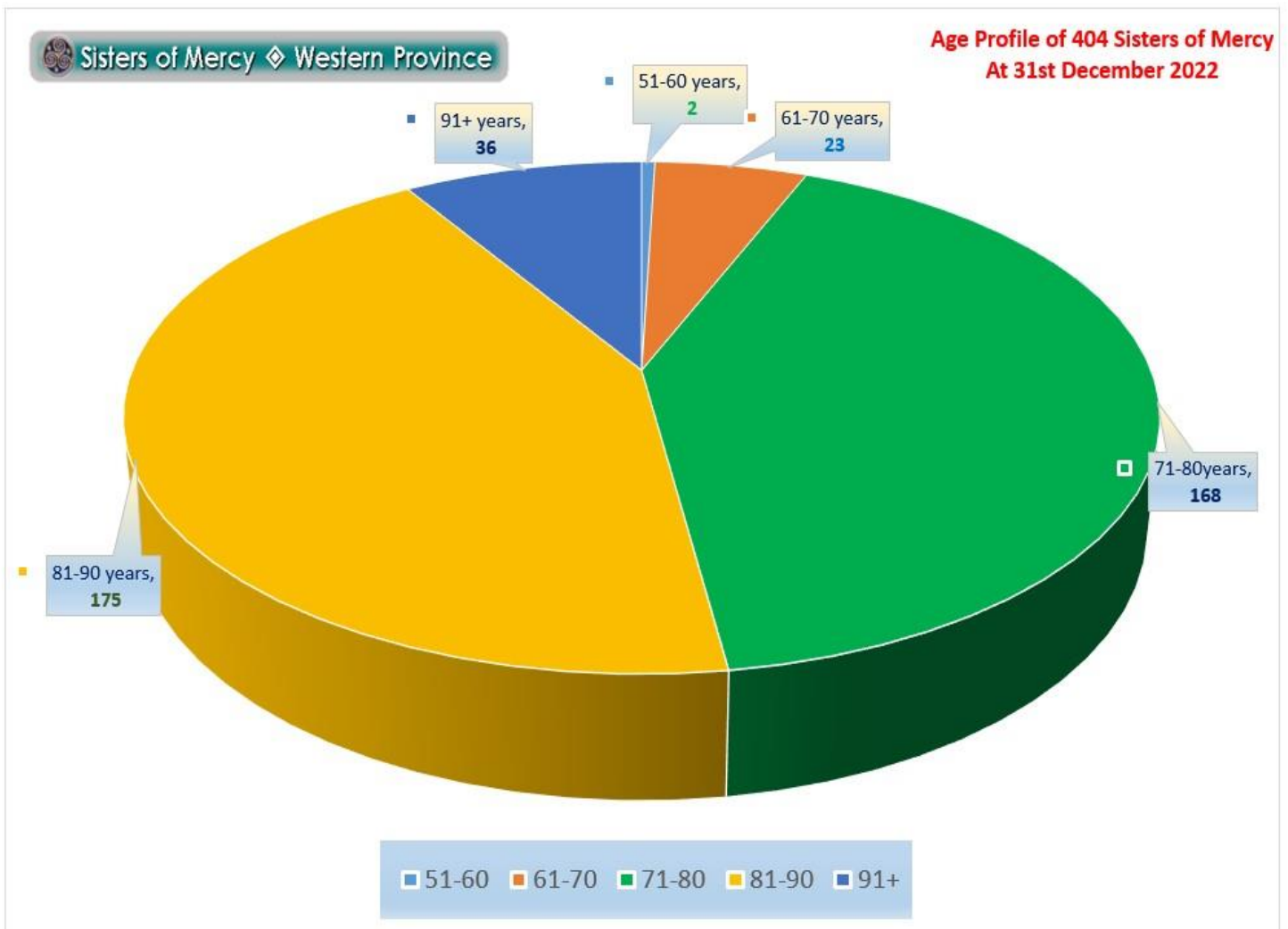
We use these goods for our common life, for the various apostolates of mercy and for the needs of the Church and especially for the poor and deprived."

Constitutions 104 (1985)



The Western Province Structure Administrative Details

The Western Province ('the Province') is part of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy. It was formed in 1994 following re-structuring of formerly autonomous Mercy Congregations in the Dioceses of Achonry; Ardagh and Clonmacnois; Clonfert; Elphin; Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora; Killala; Tuam. There are 404 Sisters in the Province.





ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Address of Principal Office: Caoineas, Society Street, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway H53 W0V2

Trustees of the Charity:

Sr. Breege O'Neill	Provincial Leader
Sr. Margaret Casey	Asst. Provincial Leader (to February 2023)
Sr. Úna Purcell	Provincial Team Member
Sr. Maura Bane	Provincial Team Member
Sr. Áine Barrins	Provincial Team Member

Provincial Treasurer: Sr. Marie King

Independent Auditors: Walsh O'Brien Harnett
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Audit Firm
104 Lower Baggot Street,
Dublin 2, D02 Y940

Principal Bankers: Bank of Ireland
Loughrea
Co. Galway, H62 YE36

Investment Managers: Cantor Fitzgerald Ireland
Cantor Fitzgerald House
23 St. Stephen's Green
Dublin 2 D02 AR55

Solicitors:

William F. Semple & Company
Solicitors
Lough Corrib House
Waterside
Galway, H91 PT0C

Concanon & Meagher Solicitors
Legal Services
Frank Stockwell Road
Tuam
Co. Galway, H54 RP02

Joseph Jordan Solicitors
Main Street
Ballinasloe
Co. Galway H53 C603

Brendan L. Johnson Solicitors
75 John Street
Sligo, F91 D586



Gearty & Co
Solicitors
4 – 5 Church Street
Longford, N39 D5H0

Mason Hayes & Curran
Solicitors
South Bank House
Barrow Street
Dublin 4, D04 TR29

Financial Advisors:

L&P Trustee Services Limited
Cantor Fitzgerald Ireland Limited
75 St. Stephen's Green
Dublin 2 DO2 PR50

Public Benefit

Public Benefit is achieved in a variety of ways, as shown throughout this Report.

The Beneficiaries are peoples of the Republic of Ireland, and charities that work for relief overseas, for example, Medecins Sans Frontiers and Trócaire, without distinction on grounds of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, nationality, ethnic identity, political or religious opinion.

Public Benefit is delivered through religious activities, overseas aid, promoting ecological awareness and a variety of services to families, older people, children, and people experiencing hunger and poverty.

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the Duty of the Charities Act ROI 2009.



Object of the Charity

- The advancement of Religion
- The alleviation of poverty or economic hardship including of those in need spiritually as well as materially



ACTIVITIES

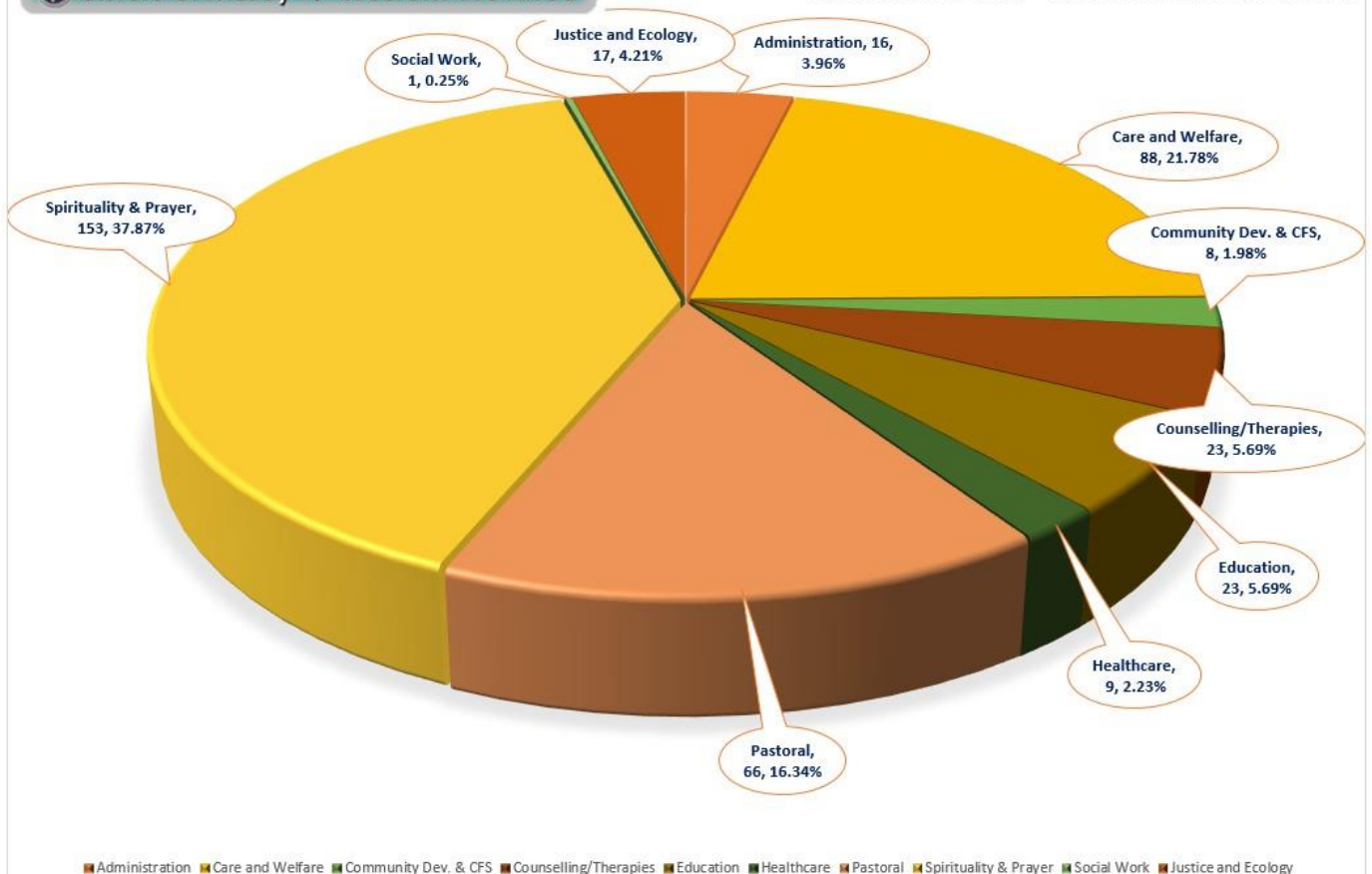
1. Congregational Living and the Advancement of Religion
2. Healthcare and the Compassionate Care of the Sick and those in Need
3. Relief of Poverty, Promotion of Education, Justice and other Charitable Activities
4. Collaboration with and support of other Groups
5. Positive Impact Investment
6. Upkeep of Listed Assets

The Charity relies on the support of the 404 Sisters of Mercy who form the Province membership carrying out the objectives/purposes of the Charity through various activities and ministries.

MINISTRY PROFILE of 404 Sisters of Mercy

Sisters of Mercy ♦ Western Province

MINISTRY PROFILE - 404 MEMBERS: 31/12/2022





1. Congregational Living and the Advancement of Religion

The activities under this heading include the following:



A. Community Prayer and Intercession in support of local and global needs

The advancement of Religion is of prime importance to the Trustees and pervades all aspects of the Charity's work. The Trustees continue to assess the Charity's work and to search for appropriate ways of carrying out this ministry in today's world. The work in this area is mainly carried out through the prayer, compassionate presence and outreach of members in local communities.

B. Contributing to Faith Communities through Financial Support and active participation in Faith Development Projects

Faith and spiritual development are central to the Mission of the Charity. Many members collaborate with others in their parish communities, in pastoral visitation, in prayer ministry, with the housebound, sick and dying, in funeral rituals, parish liturgies and choirs, also in faith formation and sacramental preparation and in community activities that support and encourage leadership development.

Collaboration with Poor Clare Sisters, Drumshanbo, Co. Leitrim

Since the 1990's a Mercy Community support the Poor Clare Order. They manage a Lodge which offers accommodation, quiet space and access to the contemplative prayer life, as well as being involved in the local church and wider community.





Financial Support

The Charity has supported the outreach of the Association of Catholic Priests as a way of contributing to the development of the Catholic Church in Ireland.

C. Providing opportunities for Theological Reflection and Spiritual Growth

The Sisters participate in an annual retreat, sometimes in-house or in retreat houses elsewhere or with parishes.

D. Supporting, Upskilling and Re-Training Trustees, Mercy Associates, Employees and Sisters in the Advancement of Religion

Sisters and Mercy Associates were actively involved at many different levels in the Synodal Pathway of the Catholic Church and the Trustees supported them in this endeavour. The Synodal Process was also utilized by Trustees, Leaders and Employees in their approach to ministry.

In June – July to further the mission of the Congregation into the future, delegates participated in a Congregational Chapter, planning for the restructuring of the Congregation. Zoom meetings were organised to maximise involvement.

Trustees continued the study of *Graced Crossroads* by Ted Dunne, aimed at engaging in Pathways to Deep Change and Transformation.

Trustees and leadership teams availed of Professional Supervision and regularly engaged professional facilitators to assist in ongoing planning.

A post-Covid Province-wide Visitation took place when Trustees met all members.

Online leadership skills training and workshops were organised for leaders of local communities. Members continued to avail of opportunities online to deepen their understanding of the new cosmology and eco-spirituality.

A bus trip to Baggot Street Heritage Centre was financed for the Ukrainians living in the Convent in Loughrea and a trip to Knock Shrine was financed for Ukrainians living in Loughrea and Gort Convents.



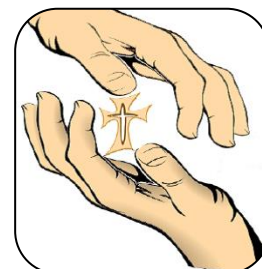
2. Healthcare and the compassionate care of the sick and those in need

Activities include:



Care and Wellbeing of Membership & Trustees' responsibility to resource this

Catherine McAuley generated in her Sisters a deep concern and compassion for the sick and dying and today, over 180 years later, wellbeing activities, healthcare, care of the dying and the bereaved still engage many of the members of the Province.

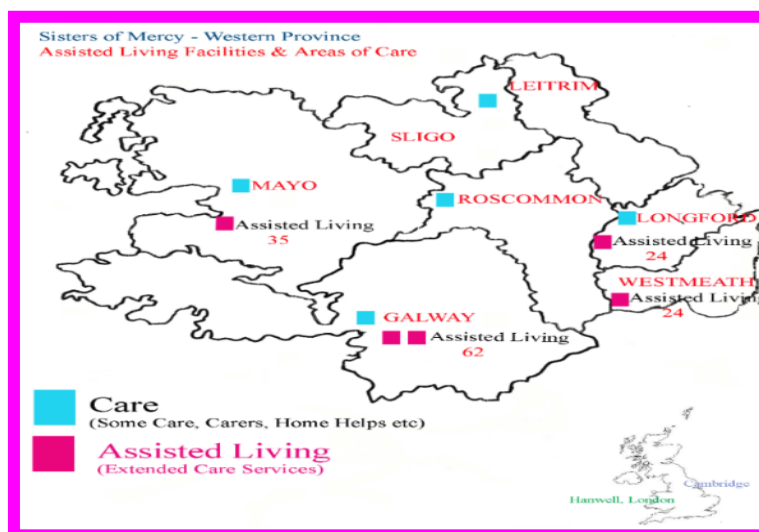


Being a Sister of Mercy includes voluntarily donating all earnings and income to the Charity over a lifetime. The Trustees will safeguard the Sisters' rights to dignity and comfort in their senior years with aims summarised below, applicable for the foreseeable future.

- Ensuring that all members of the Province receive the appropriate level of care according to age and circumstance
- Maintaining the properties used as Community houses, as well as assessing/reviewing their suitability for an ageing membership, adapting /replacing as feasible
- Judicious management of the finances of the Charity.



Sisters of Mercy – Western Province Assisted Living Facilities & Areas of Care



Human Resources

Leaders, Coordinators and Managers play a key role in the delivery of care as do all who staff and resource our larger communities. In recent years responsibilities at all levels have increased dramatically from those who locally offer Sisters assistance with the activities of daily living - night care, housekeeping, driving- to those engaged in middle management – all responsibilities formerly undertaken by Sisters themselves.

Every 6 years a Province-wide major forum takes place termed a “Chapter”

The Call of Chapter 2019 states:

“Aware that the care and wellbeing needs within our Province are constantly evolving we will

- *Provide professional healthcare co-ordination at Province level*
- *Continually review and upgrade support systems*
- *Ensure that those with specific roles in this ministry are adequately resourced and supported.”*

In September 2020 the Trustees appointed two Sisters as fulltime Health and Wellbeing Coordinators. In 2022 a third person was employed to join this team. The area of resourcing of care and support needed ever-increasing attention from the Trustees in 2022, a pattern that will continue going forward.

Nursing Home Care

Up to 50 of the Sisters were resident in various Nursing Homes on 31st December 2022 and many members are involved in the pastoral care of Sisters who require such care.



B. Hope House - Addiction Centre (<https://hopehouse.ie>)

The Sisters of Mercy continue to support the work of Hope House Addiction Treatment Centre in Foxford, Co. Mayo, where a Sister of Mercy for the past 9 years has provided her professional services full time on a voluntary basis, an annual salary cost saving of approximately €50,000.

Another Sister of Mercy is the Director of Hope House, also providing her time and services far in excess of the standard working week, again a cost saving but also a huge benefit in terms of knowledge, expertise and experience.

C. Community Development

Continuing the vision of Catherine Mc Auley the Trustees support services, projects and endeavours and collaborate with groups other than Mercy in the promotion of health, happiness and the wellbeing of all people. In 2022 members' activities locally included:

- Work with *Direct Provision Centres* to help with educational needs of children and adults and to provide advocacy where needed
- Pastoral and Advocacy service to immigrant families throughout the Province
- Support to Kurdish families in Carrick-on-Shannon through advocacy and teaching English
- Welcoming new Syrian families e.g. an evening of welcome in Drumshanbo
- Endeavouring to transform Ecological Attitudes (Lifestyle Choices Group)



Two 19th Century Convents were closed by the Trustees in 2022 as well as 2 smaller community houses in Edgeworthstown, Co. Longford and Castlebar, Co. Mayo



Gort Convent closed its doors on 17th August 2021 after 164 years of direct ministry and on 13th April 2022 Gort Convent welcomed 39 Ukrainian Refugees.



On March 25th 2022 Loughrea Convent closed after 168 years of serving the community and on April 9th 2022 the 1st arrivals of 48 refugees from war-torn Ukraine were welcomed by the people of Loughrea.



2 Sisters are involved with the Ukrainians at local level

1 Sister is involved in the Support Group Committee

Sisters of Mercy Western Province

Assisted Living Communities as a means of support and care

Today five large purpose-built Assisted Living Communities geographically spread throughout the Province accommodate one hundred and forty five Sisters. Each facility is designed, equipped and resourced to meet Sisters' accommodation and greater dependency needs. Thanks to the suitability of this accommodation and careful management, we remained largely Covid free.

A main meal is available in Assisted Living Facilities to other Sisters living in nearby smaller units.



VITA House Family Centre, Roscommon

The Sisters of Mercy have for approximately 10 years supported the outreach service to the Brazilian community of Roscommon and surrounds. A portion of the Province allocation of funds from the Congregational Solidarity Fund went to VITA. In 2022 €7,000 was given to this project.

D. Social Work and Social Services

Many Sisters of Mercy pioneered the development of Social Services in the West of Ireland and the Midlands, and today some continue to be involved as members of multidisciplinary teams and other groups. They also work with Citizens' Advice, Meals-on-Wheels Services, Charity Shops, St. Vincent De Paul Society, the Samaritans, the Travelling Community, Cancer Care, Day Care Centres.

Properties of the Charity continue to be leased to Social Services at nominal rates in various towns and villages. Rooms are provided for groups such as A.A.

3. Relief of Poverty, promotion of Education, Justice and other charitable activities

- **Promotion of all aspects of Education**
- **Justice, peace & reconciliation**
- **Overseas development and support**
- **Pastoral and social care and development**
- **Collaboration with other charities/groups**
- **Involvement in critical global and local issues**

I. Promotion of all aspects of Education & Transfer of Trusteeship

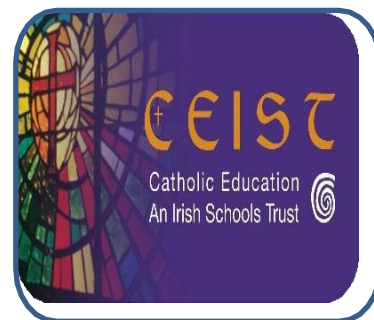
The provision of formal education was a major focus of the Sisters of Mercy for over 170 years. Special care and attention was given to children who were economically and environmentally stressed or deprived. Mercy Schools were institutions of creativity, innovation and academic excellence, while Boarding Schools enabled children from rural Ireland to receive an education.

Discernment regarding the rationalisation of schools owned and run by religious began in the 1970's and gained momentum in the 1980's and 1990's, reflected in the gradual transfer of Trusteeship and ownership of Mercy Schools.



Voluntary Secondary Schools

CEIST (Catholic Education an Irish Schools Trust) - an independent entity - was set up in 2007 to act as Trustees for Secondary Schools for the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland and for four other Religious Congregations, offering the choice of an education in the Catholic tradition in a pluralist society. The Trusteeship of the Charity's 21 schools will transfer to CEIST.



The EDUCENA Foundation (Education Enabled) is the property holding company for CEIST, and works to maximize the financial resources needed to finance the Trust now and into the future. The task of finalising the transfer of schools to EDUCENA continues to involve considerable work, expertise, and cost on the part of the Trustees and our legal and property advisors.

In 2022 the Charity committed to donating a vacant property to Educena.

In 2022 the Charity paid the final instalment of €200,000 to Kilmore Moy Parish, Ballina for some land which became part of the site for the new-build Voluntary Secondary School there. The Trustees of the Charity consider this a contribution to the education of future generations in Ballina.

In May 2007 two other Voluntary Schools were transferred to Dioceses of Galway and Elphin.

Spirit of Mercy Award in CEIST schools

In each former Mercy school this award is granted annually to the student who lives out the Spirit of Mercy in creative and integral ways in home, school and community.

Community Schools and Community Colleges

The Charity is Joint Trustee of 9 Community Schools with the Educational Training Boards and other Religious Orders and is involved in 3 Community Colleges. A Sister is a member of the Board of Governors of Boyle Community College. The Trustees have been considering its capacity to be involved in the future Trusteeship of these schools. In 2017 it negotiated an Agency Agreement with CEIST which would allow CEIST to exercise the Active Trusteeship on its behalf. The functions of the Co-trustees continue to be carried out by CEIST.

Primary Schools

The work of transferring primary school properties to the dioceses continued in 2022, 13 completed to date. The substantial legal and property work involved is coordinated and managed by the Provincial Team and Province Offices. Professional costs are borne by the Charity.



Sisters' Involvement at Board and Local Level

Board of CEIST:	1 Director & 1 member
Board of Educena:	1 Director & 1 member
Members of Boards of Management off Primary and Post Primary level:	Multiple Sisters
Interview Boards:	Multiple Sisters
Volunteering at local level:	Multiple Sisters

Archives Service



Through our Archives service the Charity aims to preserve the 186 years history of the relationship of the Congregation with the lives of the Irish people. The aim is to collect and preserve resource material that will be available to students and researchers in the future. One member works in managing the Provincial Archive Office in Ballinasloe. Several members contribute through the writing of annals, of personal memoirs, oral recording and the collection of archival material. Other members work on specific projects, researching and writing up the history of particular foundations, events or ministries or recording a series of professionally executed podcasts which highlight some expressions of the charism of Mercy.

II Justice, Peace and Reconciliation

Mercy World Wide

Mercy International Association ('M.I.A.') <https://www.mercyworld.org/>

The Charity completed its financial commitment to MIA in 2018. A global effort to communicate the vision of Catherine McAuley and to put it into action, done through Mercy Global Action at the United Nations.

Mercy Global Presence ('M.G.P.') This initiative, begun in 2019, focuses on the degradation of earth and the displacement of people.





Justice Peace and Reconciliation

The Trustees embrace the deepening global awareness that poverty is rooted in the exploitation of natural resources for the benefit of the very few. The members of the Charity support Justice Issues through education, advocacy and through financial contributions - giving without boundaries, towards the welfare of our planet and the whole community of life. The following figures indicate the Charity's commitment in Ireland.

Relief for Homeless People at national level

In 2022 the Charity donated

- €10,000 to Galway Simon
- €5,000 to Merchants Quay
- €5,000 to Peter McVerry Trust
- €500.00 to the Big Issue
- €5,000 to Threshold
- €5,000 to Focus Ireland
- €10,000 to Capuchin Day Centre



Justice Awareness Group

This Province Group is committed to promoting awareness and education aimed at building a just society inspired by compassion and right relationships.

In 2022 information notices were distributed to the members from the Justice Desk on the following significant United Nations International days:

- Fairtrade Fortnight: 27th February – 12th March;
- International Mother Earth Day 22nd April;
- International Day for the Eradication of Poverty 17th October;
- International Human Rights Day/ Ethical Christmas Gift Giving: 10th December.

The purpose of these was to encourage actions, such as:

- Buying locally
- Supporting people in poverty or otherwise marginalised
- Restoring the Earth even in small ways
- Collaborating with other agencies, locally and globally

Solidarity with and support for former residents of Industrial Schools

See Appendix 1 – story to date



III Overseas development and support

The Charity resources all charitable works carried out in the name of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy, Western Province. This objective, rooted in the priority outreach of the Congregation to the poor and marginalized of society, is given expression through the involvement of the members on the ground and increasingly in its financial sponsorship of numerous charitable activities.

In 2022 we donated to the following charities for work overseas:

- €10,000 Médecins Sans Frontières in support of migrant people
- €2,000 VITA community development in Ethiopia
- €20,000 UNICEF
- €25,000 Trócaire
- €10,000 Building of a School in Zambia
- €2,000 Self Help Africa
- €5,000 Redemptorist Appeal for Ukraine

IV Pastoral, Social Care and Development

The Charity is concerned with promoting pastoral and social development initiatives and responding to the needs of our time in line with Christian values.

The aims of the Trustees in this area include:

- Encouraging and motivating members at local level to work with and assist poor, elderly and marginalized people
- Enabling all members to carry out meaningful social and pastoral work within the community after assessing their skills and the needs of the local area

Examples of such work undertaken by individual members include:

- Working with abused and disadvantaged women
- Community social work with the homeless
- Social and pastoral ministry
- Advocacy and support for asylum seekers and refugees
- Support of former residents of industrial schools
- Chaplaincy
- Befriending people in Direct Provision Centres
- Supporting Education of Students



V Support of other charities/groups

The Charity supports/resources local charities and groups other than Mercy. We provide:

- operational space at no or minimal rent
- personnel
- direct cash funding

Mercy Ministry Support Fund

This Fund, in operation since 1998, is an example of one method of providing financial help at local level. €125,000 is set aside each year for ministries and needs where members work in partnership with others for the relief of poverty/support of people in distress in Ireland.



In **2022** €139,500.00 was donated to local needs in the following areas:

- €23,300.00 Family support
- €27,400.00 Local Social Services
- €43,500.00 Local St. Vincent de Paul
- €11,500.00 Educational Ministry
- €5,000.00 Women's Groups and Men's Shed
- €6,200.00 Spirituality
- €10,200.00 Cancer Care / Hospice
- €9,000.00 Addiction Centre
- €5,500.00 Health Ministry
- €1,000.00 Refugees
- €1,100.00 Ministry for Young People

In addition to the above, the sum of €63,853.02 was contributed at the discretion of the Provincial to support specific families in need.

VI Involvement in critical global and local issues

“Think globally, act locally”

The Charity works collaboratively with Mercy Congregations and other Orders throughout the world, with Government, Statutory and voluntary agencies at all levels to address urgent global challenges.

An Gáirdín Organic and Ecology Centre, Portumna, Co. Galway

Two Sisters of Mercy form a community and operate this Centre established in 1994. The project and activities there are financed by the Charity. Since 2015 the charity finances the employment of a plant manager, appointed to develop the Centre and its activities.

Activities and programmes of biodiversity interest are manifold as can be seen on The



Gáirdín Facebook page: [An Gairdin](#) and website <https://angairdin.ie/>.

A new film on the Universe Story was produced at An Gáirdín in collaboration with the local Primary School children and students from NUIG. The film lasts about 12 minutes and, while mainly created for primary and secondary level pupils, is instructive and inspiring for all.



Lifestyle Choices Group

This group has been in existence since 2009. Membership is comprised of Sisters and lay colleagues, networking with a wide variety of like-minded groups. Their activity is undertaken within the context of the Congregational Policy for Ecological Responsibility and they advocate for personal and communal action.

4. Collaboration with and Support of Other Charities/ Groups

Western Province 2019 Chapter Statement:

“In all our endeavours we work in partnership with other relevant agencies and bodies”

Collaboration and partnership with and support of others pervades all Activities of the Charity – it is how we are and how we operate. We collaborate with the Congregational Leadership, the other Provinces, Mercy International Association, Church Authorities, AMRI. We comply with civil guidelines, The Charity Regulator, GDPR as well as Policies and Public Health guidelines issued by the Government. At local level we work with ministry colleagues, other religious congregations, parish and diocesan groups, statutory and voluntary bodies, in serving the local and wider community, whether as employees or volunteers.













5. Positive Impact Investment

We view our investment portfolio as part of our Mission. Alongside our active Ministries, we also seek to bring about change through our investment portfolios. Some investments can be harmful; for example, investments in fossil fuel companies or armaments companies supports the production of goods that can be highly damaging to the environment or human wellbeing. Avoiding these types of investments is an important step in ensuring that our investment portfolio is not involved in harmful activities. But it is only the first step along the path of what can be achieved.

While avoiding harmful activities is important, we believe that it is also important to use our investments to bring about positive change in the world. We therefore seek to invest in activities that have beneficial impacts, for both individual wellbeing and for the environment.

We assess these positive impacts under a number of headings that we believe are important measures of how our investments are positively affecting the world around us. Below are some of the positive impacts achieved by the investment portfolio:

 CO2 EMISSIONS	 RENEWABLE ENERGY	 FOSSIL FUEL RESERVES	 CARBON SINKS	 CO ₂ EMISSIONS SAVED	 TONNES OF CO ₂ AVOIDED	 JOBS CREATED	 HELP FOR THE GLOBAL POOR
For every tonne of CO ₂ emitted by an average charity portfolio, your portfolio will SEQUESTER (WITHDRAW) 1.2 tonnes of CO ₂	Your portfolio produces 87 times the renewable power of an average charity portfolio	Your Portfolio is FOSSIL FUEL FREE	94 times more CO ₂ sequestered (withdrawn) into carbon sinks than an average charity portfolio	L&P client portfolios saved emissions equivalent to CO ₂ emissions from 31,000 households	43 times the emissions avoided by investing in renewable power and energy efficiency projects versus an average charity portfolio	1.5 times more jobs created than an average charity portfolio, predominantly in developing world	Your Portfolio will directly impact and help 10,133 people in the Global South, via access to financial credit, clean water, and efficient cooking stoves.

A comprehensive Ethical and Positive Impact policy ensures the Portfolio remains consistent with our ethos. The Portfolio currently excludes companies involved in the production of weapons, tobacco, alcohol, pornography, and activities such as gambling and embryonic stem cell research. Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) criteria complements the screening as it improves the overall ESG risk exposure of the Portfolio. In particular, climate risk is addressed through the exclusion of fossil fuel companies and a focus to reduce the carbon footprint of the Portfolio through investment in such areas as renewable energy and forestry.

We outline below some elements of the portfolio's **Environmental Impact**

Overall Carbon Footprint

The Portfolio includes a number of carbon sink-type investments, which sequester or draw carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere. Forestry in particular is a very effective carbon sink, as trees absorb carbon dioxide as part of their growing process.



The Portfolio in aggregate will sequester (withdraw) -3,734 tonnes of CO₂e from the atmosphere per annum while an unscreened portfolio of the same size would produce 4,073 tonnes. We believe that these extremely strong carbon emission statistics makes the Portfolio part of the solution to climate change, rather than part of the problem.

Fossil Fuel Reserves

This section addresses the level of exposure to companies owning thermal coal, oil gas reserves and other unconventional sources of reserves such as oil sands, shale oil, and shale gas. Many of these reserves may not be useable if we are to keep the targeted temperature rise (as a result of global warming) below 2 degrees Celsius. This risk is referred to as stranded asset risks and it is addressed through avoidance of companies holding fossil fuel reserves. Hence, in addition to the impact, not holding these assets reduces the financial risk within the portfolio. Our Portfolio holds no fossil fuel reserves.

Renewable Energy

The benefit of generating renewable power can be measured by how much fossil fuel power (and resulting CO₂ emissions) it replaces. In 2022, the Portfolio avoided the release of almost 6,248 tonnes of CO₂e. This is equivalent to:

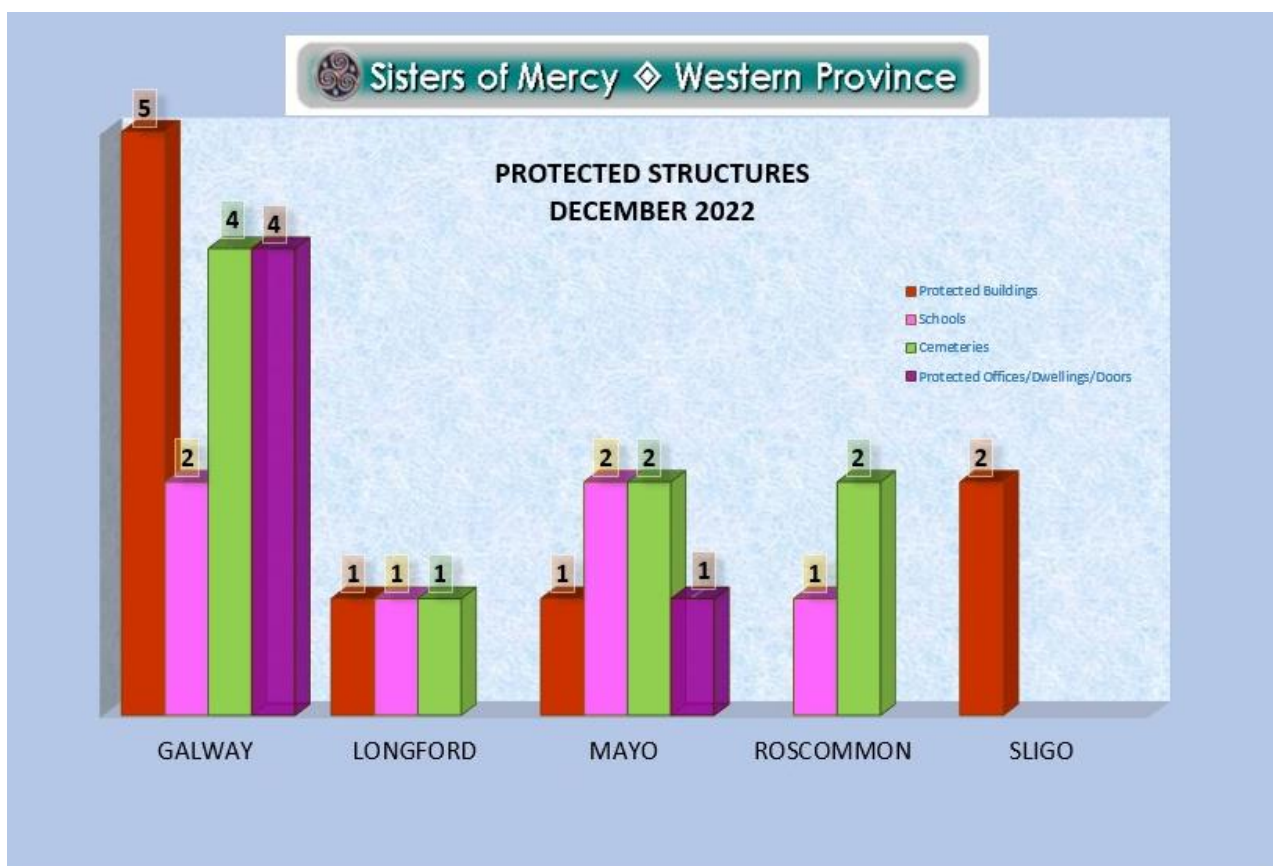
- Removing 1,349 cars from the roads every year
- 14,369 barrels of oil saved
- 5,204 acres of pine forest absorbing CO₂ for one year
- 687 round trips around the world by one typical passenger car (travelling at the equator).

In terms of renewable energy produced, the Portfolio produced 83 MWh in 2022, enough energy to power 2,210 homes.



6. Upkeep of listed assets

The Charity owns 19 protected structures and 9 protected cemeteries. The structures are typically buildings that are listed on planning authority's *Record of Protected Structures (RPS)*. By including them in the RPS, the importance of these structures is recognised; they are legally protected from harm and all future changes to the structure are controlled and managed through the development control process. The Charity is legally required to make sure that these structures do not become endangered through neglect, decay, damage or harm. When refurbishment needs to be carried out on any of these buildings, more stringent laws are applied by the local Planning Office. Oftentimes such repair works require planning permission. Renovation can prove very costly due to the expertise and materials required.



All associated with the Charity

The Trustees wish to record their recognition of the professionalism and commitment of staff, volunteers, members of the Province and all associated with the Charity. Their integrity, dedication and positive approach are very much appreciated.



Financial Review

Results for the year

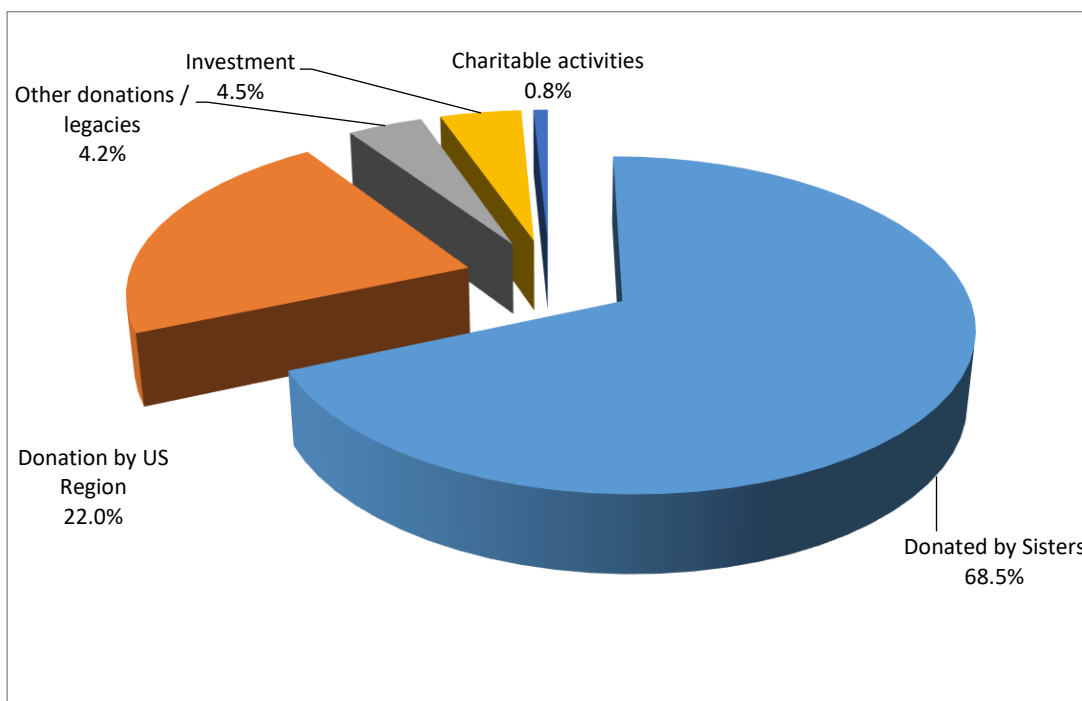
A summary of the year's accounts can be found on page X of this report.

Income - where our income came from

Income for the year totalled €13,428,523:

- Donations and legacies of €12,716,129: the vast majority of this, €9,199,248, was the salary, pension, stipend and retirement lump sum income earned by the members of the Sisters of Mercy Western Province and donated to the Charity. It also includes a €2,958,290 donation received from the Sisters of Mercy U.S. Region. The balance, €558,591, was a mixture of income received under the Charitable Donations Scheme, third party legacies, bequests, gifts, etc. received.
- Investment Income of €605,510: was the income earned on the Charity's investment portfolio and used to help fund the operating deficit.
- Charitable activities of €106,884: this was the rental income received of €56,023 and the Charity's refund under the VAT Compensation Scheme of €50,861.

Breakdown of Income - 2022





Expenditure - where the money is spent

Total expenditure for the year was €14,051,537.

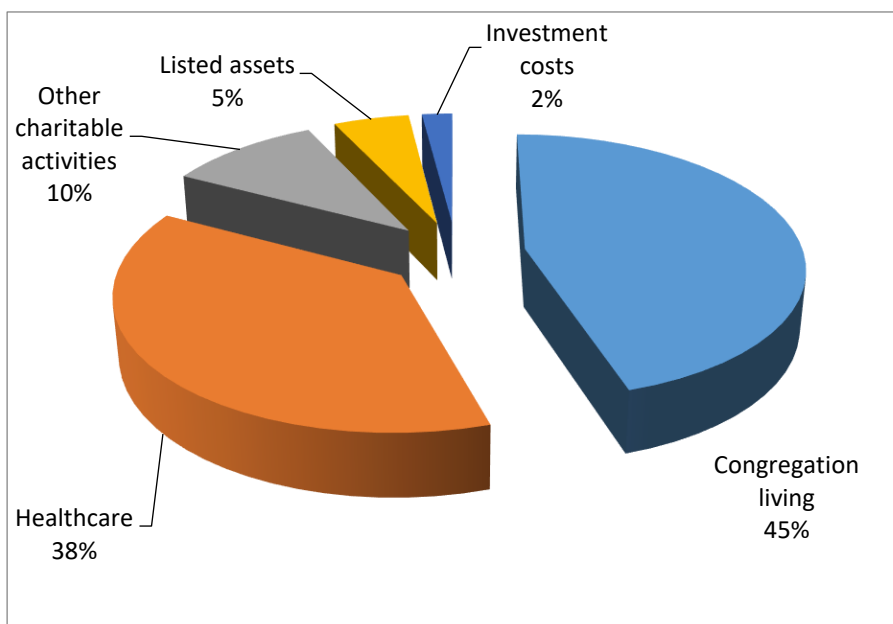
Charitable Activities - of the total, €14,051,537 or 98%, was spent on Charitable Activities:

- Congregation living, the advancement of Religion, €6,482,976: this includes the upkeep and up-skilling and retraining of the members of the Province. The members who receive salary, pension, stipend and retirement lump sum income donate them to the Charity and therefore have no independent means of support. They have devoted all of their adult years and their earnings to realize the objectives of the Charity. Many also give their services free in their various ministries and continue to do so well beyond retirement age. Hence the work of the Charity includes both the upkeep and up-skilling and retraining of the members of the Province so that they will be able to continue in their service to the public.
- Healthcare and the compassionate care of the sick and those in need, €5,375,303: Catherine McAuley generated in her Sisters a deep concern and compassion for the sick and dying and today, over 180 years later, wellbeing activities, healthcare, care of the dying and the bereaved still engage many of the members in the Province. The members of the Province are involved in this work in hospitals, hospices, nursing homes, community care and within the Community houses. In addition, the Charity must care for the elderly members of the Province who are now themselves are in need of care.
- Relief of poverty, promotion of education, justice and other charitable activities, €1,467,415: this includes expenditure on a number of headings, including Promotion of all aspects of Education, Justice, peace & reconciliation, Overseas development and support, Pastoral and social care and development, Support of other charities/groups and Involvement in critical global and local issues
- Upkeep of listed assets, €725,843: the Charity owns 19 protected structures and 9 protected cemeteries. The structures are typically buildings that are listed on planning authority's Record of Protected Structures (RPS). By including them in the RPS, the importance of these structures is recognised; they are legally protected from harm and all future changes to the structure are controlled and managed through the development control process. The Charity is legally required to make sure that these structures do not become endangered through neglect, decay, damage or harm.

Investment costs – in the year, investment costs totalled €291,547.



Breakdown of Expenditure - 2022



Net movement in funds

Net expenditure for the year, therefore, was €914,561. This was before the loss on investment assets, which when taken into account results in a net decrease in funds in the year of €3,969,895.

Investments

At 31 December 2022, the Charity had investments of €49.7m. The purpose of these funds is to provide investment income to promote the charitable objectives of the Charity and to provide capital growth in the reserves over the medium term. The objective for the investments is to generate a return of 4% per annum while utilising the charity's stated ethical investment policy. L&P (Cantor Fitzgerald Ireland) act as a Discretionary Investment Manager.

The investment funds have an ethical investment screen; they exclude companies that fall foul of certain ethical criteria, and where possible, favour stocks that provide positive benefits to society. As noted earlier, the Charity also holds a number of Positive Impact Investments that direct money towards fulfilling certain positive ethical criteria.

The Trustees, with their investment managers, review the investments on a regular basis.



Policy on reserves

At the end of the financial year, the total funds of the charity amounted to €95.0m. Of this, €0.1m is restricted for specific purposes - see Financial Statements note 20. Of the balance, €38.3m is represented by properties and other tangible fixed assets essential for the running of the Charity. The Trustees have designated another €53.8m to provide for Mission and Ministry works and Congregation Living needs. These designations are based on a *Resource Assessment* study that the Trustees commissioned in 2015. The *Resource Assessment* study is a demographic and financial model for assessing likely future commitments using specialised techniques and processes. It uses qualitative and quantitative methodologies to build a projection of future needs. Details are given in note 22 of these Financial Statements. The Trustees will continue to review and reassess these designations on an on-going basis.

Un-designated or general funds amount to €2.9m. This equates to approximately two months of unrestricted charitable expenditure. The Trustees would like this to be higher as, given the nature of the Charity's work and its commitments, they consider the level of free reserves should be approximately equal to between 6 and 12 months' expenditure.

Structure, Governance & Management

Nature of Governing Document

The governing instrument of the Province is the *Constitutions of the Sisters of Mercy* which was adopted by the General Chapter of the Congregation in August 1994 and approved by the *Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life* (Rome) in April 1995. The Province, as noted earlier, is one of four Provinces in Ireland and is an unincorporated association.

The governmental structure of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy involves a number of inter-connected units: local, provincial and congregational. The nature of the authority in each unit is described in the Constitutions. The Province is a unit of the Congregation having the personnel and other resources to support its life, mission and membership.

Method adopted for appointing Trustees (Provincial Leadership Team)

The Province is governed by the Provincial Leader and the Provincial Leadership Team who are elected every six years by members of the Province. Members of the Provincial Leadership Team are chosen for their expertise and skills as well as their experience and knowledge of the Congregation, its nature and mission. They are the Trustees of the Charity and receive no remuneration for their services as Trustees.

Organisational Structure and Decision-making

Every six years members are involved in a prolonged meeting – called a Chapter – a period of reflection/prayer, assessment, evaluation and planning in light of current and future needs, the development of policies and effective use of resources.

With regard to decision-making, the Trustees have responsibility for the overall running of the Charity. The Trustees meet on a regular basis to review developments with regard to the Charity and its activities.

Trustees attend formal training courses on the duties of Trustees and seek guidance and



advice as necessary from their legal, investment and property advisors on the issues which arise in carrying out their duties. In addition, the Trustees have established a number of advisory groups. The function of these groups, whose membership includes various professional consultants, is to advise the Trustees on different aspects of stewardship and the general management of the assets of the Charity.

Systems of accountability are operational throughout the Province. At the six yearly Chapter meeting there is a General and Financial Report to the members. The Provincial Treasurer is appointed by the Provincial Leader with the consent of her Team. The Provincial Treasurer administers the affairs of the Charity under the direction of the Provincial Leader and her Team. The majority of the income of the Charity comes from members' salaries, stipends and pensions, sale of property and income from investments. The salary, stipend and pension income is voluntarily donated to a common fund, administered through the Provincial Stewardship Office.

The Charity is a member of AMRI.

The Association of Leaders of Religious and Missionaries of Ireland represents Religious Congregations, Societies of Apostolic Life and Lay Missionary groups. It is funded by a per capita contribution. **AMRI** promotes the common interests of the member organisations and supports their leaders in responding to the challenges of the time. The Provincial Leader serves on the AMRI executive.

Risk Management

The Trustees undertake a full risk assessment on an annual basis and monitor progress on a half-yearly basis. This process is supported by the Finance Group, who work closely with the Trustees in this area. The Trustees identified the following as being the principal risks to which the Charity is exposed:

- **Governance and Management**
- **Financial**
- **Operational**



Governance and Management Risks are revealed in:

1. Lack of decisive direction, strategy and forward planning

The steps taken to mitigate the risk:

- Chapter Statement which inspires and directs the Strategic Plan is reviewed
- Trustees are updated on the Charities Governance Code
- Budgets/financial plans are created
- A financial plan (budget) is prepared every year, which is reviewed and agreed by the Trustees
- Actual performance is compared against budget
- Variances are investigated
- Financial and operational performance is monitored in light of the purpose of the Charity

2. Lack of relevant skills

The steps taken to mitigate the risk:

- Induction is provided for new Trustees
- Trustees attend formal training courses on the duties of Trustees
- Trustees seek guidance and advice from their legal, investment and property advisors as required

Financial Risks are revealed in:

1. Poor Investment Performance

The Trustees consider variability of investment returns on the investment funds to constitute the Charity's major financial risk.

The steps taken to mitigate the risk:

- The appointment of an investment advisor who has worked with the Trustees on an investment strategy /investment objectives that consider diversity, prudence and liquidity criteria
- The investment objectives are considered on an ongoing basis
- Investment reports are received and reviewed by the Trustees/Finance Group at the end of each quarter
- An Investment Policy is in place

2. Budgetary Control and Financial Reporting

The steps taken to mitigate the risk:

- Budgets are linked with the objectives of the Charity and are reviewed at the end of each quarter with the Finance Group and the Financial Advisor
- The Trustees/Finance Group together with the Finance Advisor ensure that the necessary skills are available to produce and interpret financial reports on a quarterly basis
- Cash flow variances are reviewed and explained at the quarterly Finance Meetings treasury management
- Cash flow planning is a key component of the quarterly Finance Meetings



Fraud or Error

The steps taken to mitigate the risk:

- Policies and procedures are outlined in the Finance Handbook
- Financial control procedures are reviewed
- Duties are segregated

Operational Risks are revealed in:

New Initiatives

The steps taken to mitigate the risk:

- All projects are appraised, budgeted for and costed
- Are authorised by the Charity
- Have expenditure limits

Disaster Recovery and Planning

The steps taken to mitigate the risk:

- Computer back-ups are carried out on a daily basis and disks are held offsite
- Annual insurance renewal meetings are held to review insurable risks

Procedural and Systems Documentation

The steps taken to mitigate the risk:

- Policies and Procedures are documented in the Financial Handbook
- The Financial Handbook is reviewed and updated

Having assessed the major risks to which the Charity/Province is exposed, the Trustees believe that they have established effective systems to mitigate those risks.

POLICIES



The Trustees, in conjunction with the Congregational Leadership Team ensure that policies and guidelines are developed, circulated, implemented and regularly evaluated and updated. The Trustees ensure compliance with all statutory requirements.



Safeguarding Activity 2022

Child Safeguarding – Policy Implementation

- ✓ Safeguarding Manager and DLP in place
- ✓ Annual Audit, Report and Case Review completed
- ✓ Training delivered as per policy including Mandated Persons Training
- ✓ Training on Localised Risk Assessment and NBSCCCI info sessions

Adult Safeguarding – Policy Implementation

- ✓ Annual Audit completed.
- ✓ Information sessions conducted for all Sisters, local representatives and employees.

Human Resources

The Province is an employer and one member is Human Resources Coordinator. Her work includes the provision of information and the monitoring of our compliance with employment legislation, development and updating of staff handbook, etc. Supported by two other members, she also oversees Health and Safety compliance throughout the Province.



Property Resource



“For the sake of our mercy mission, the congregation and each province has the right to acquire and possess, to administer and alienate property, temporal goods and revenues according to the norms of universal law and these constitutions, with due respect for civil law” (Cons. 119 1995)

“We value the resources of the earth as gifts of God and use them in a spirit of stewardship ... In the spirit of religious poverty we seek to have a simple life-style and to balance concern for our future with support and compassion for poor

and needy people.” (Cons.118 1995)

Members of the Province are committed to a lifestyle reflecting the fact that all possessions are held in trust for the mission of the Congregation. As property trustees the aim is to promote the mission of the Province, addressing members' needs and those of the wider community.

The relevant professional advice is taken into account in the areas of leases and agreements, protected structures, planning, health and safety legislation, acquisition,



refurbishment and disposal of property and all legally binding issues and transactions.
Properties in 2022 were held in one or other of the following Property Trustee Companies

Sisters of Mercy (Western Province) CLG
The Convent of Mercy (Ardagh and Clonmacnoise Diocese) CLG
The Convent of Mercy Trustees Galway CLG

Movement of Properties During 2022

The Trustees agreed to the following transactions:

On the Market

Upper Main Street, Ballymahon, Co. Longford

Sales Completed/Transferred

Beech Haven, Church Street, Ballinasloe
2.79 Acres transferred to Educena
Archives, Forster Street, Galway to COPE



Future Plans

The Provincial Leader and Team will continue to attend to its governance responsibilities as Trustees of the Charity. They will review its needs and spending plans and make every effort to manage its existing assets as efficiently as possible in order to generate the income necessary to achieve the Charity's aims. Nevertheless, insofar as possible, the Charity plans to give ongoing support to the various works of the Province, to its members, colleagues and collaborators in ministry.

Chapter 2019 set the directives for the Province for the six years to 2024.

CHAPTER EVENT 2019

*Behold, I am Doing a New Thing!
Can You Not See It?*
Isaiah 43:19

WESTERN PROVINCE

Faithful to the call of our Congregational Chapter (2018) and believing that fidelity to this call will be transformative for us and the world...

Vision
We nurture and support contemplative living by

- ◆ allowing ourselves to be open to the mystery of God in all of life
- ◆ deepening our understanding of creation-centred spirituality
- ◆ committing to times of silence and deep listening in prayer
- ◆ sharing our faith journey

Charism
Recognizing that God's Mercy is the wellspring from which our charism flows we will

- ◆ immerse ourselves in the life and spirit of Catherine McAuley
- ◆ value and nurture the charism
- ◆ share our Mercy story with its light and shadow

Leadership
In the light of impending changes to our Congregational structures we will

- ◆ develop and enliven our cluster system
- ◆ embrace the transition to lay leadership and lay management

Care and Wellbeing
Aware that the care and wellbeing needs within our Province are constantly evolving we will

- ◆ provide professional healthcare co-ordination at Province level
- ◆ continually review and upgrade support systems
- ◆ ensure that those with specific roles in this ministry are adequately resourced and supported

Mission
We continue to respond compassionately to the critical issues of today - the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. We commit anew to

- ◆ live in ecologically friendly ways
- ◆ promote care of the earth among ourselves, our co-workers and with the wider community
- ◆ respond to the needs of homeless people, asylum seekers and the disempowered, especially women, by sharing our resources with them and engaging in advocacy and lobbying on their behalf.

In all our endeavours we work in partnership with other relevant agencies and bodies.

A six year plan has been drawn up to enable the fulfilment of the directives. This plan is reviewed and updated quarterly.

The Trustees of the Charity will continue with the transfer of Voluntary Secondary School Properties to The Educena Foundation and the transfer of Primary Schools to the relevant Diocesan authorities. They will establish the best way forward for involvement in the Community Schools. Time and monies will be involved in finalising the transfer of the remaining school properties to both the Educena Foundation and the Catholic Church patrons. The Province will continue to give ongoing support to the new Trust Bodies.

There will be continuing commitment to the ongoing care of all the members of the Province. Concern for the elderly and frail members will necessitate the ongoing regular review of community houses and the assessment of their suitability for ageing members. We will continue to engage with Management Companies in facility management and supportive services/care in some of the communities. Where necessary, nursing home care will be accessed for those who need it.



The members of the Province, older and younger, are the mainstay of the Charity. They are its chief agents as well as the source of the funding available to meet its obligations. Devising and monitoring adequate systems to support life in the communities is an ongoing consideration and challenge in a time of unprecedented change in our demographics.

An increasing amount of finance will need to be allocated to human resources and Consultancy services. Ageing members now voluntarily acting in leadership and management roles will need to be replaced by paid employees/third parties.

In 2022 an Extraordinary General Chapter was held – the outcome of which was to seek approval from Rome for a change of Constitutions. If passed, major structural change will follow for the Charity.

Approved on behalf of the Provincial Leadership Team:

Sr. Breege O'Neill

Date:



Appendix 1

Childcare: Solidarity with and support for former residents of Industrial Schools

The Sisters of Mercy have been engaged in childcare since the opening of the House of Mercy in Baggot Street in 1827. This involvement continued through the years in more formal settings such as in orphanages, industrial schools, group homes and in after-care of those who had left their direct care. Many young people and adults continue to maintain strong bonds of friendship with the Sisters who support them on life's journey and advocate for them when the need arises. This connection with past residents continues through visits, phone calls, attendance at birthday celebrations, weddings and many other social occasions as well as other interactions in the daily events of life.

The findings of the Commission to inquire into Child Abuse evoked a very generous response from the Sisters of Mercy. In light of revelations of the harshness of regimes in industrial schools in the past, the Congregation established a Helpline and Counselling Service in 1996. This was taken over and expanded by CORI the following year and operated as *Faoiseamh* until 2011 when it was replaced by the service called *Towards Healing*, a *One Church* service financed jointly by the Irish Bishops' Conference, IMU and CORI. The services of the Congregational archivist and her staff have been available free of charge to past residents of Mercy institutions who seek their records. A counsellor was employed specifically to meet with those approaching the service in their search for records and she still works part-time with the service.

The Western Province contributed €1,003,942.88 to *Faoiseamh* between 1996 and 2011. *Towards Healing* replaced *Faoiseamh* in 2011. The Western Province contributes to the funding of *Towards Healing* in continuation of support for survivors of Clerical and Religious abuse. To date the Western Province has contributed €324,122.00 to *Towards Healing*.

The Congregation contributed a total of €33,091,114 in property and finance to the 2002 Redress Scheme. The Western Province contributed €1,695,013.00 in cash and properties to the value of €6,685,137.00. It has taken a long time to complete the legal work of transferring some properties and all transfers are now completed.

Following the CICA Report of 2009 the Congregation pledged a voluntary contribution of €20 million in cash as well as property then valued at €11.5 million, to the Statutory Fund which was set up to help those who had complained of abuse in industrial schools. In addition, the Provinces offered to the State properties which were valued at €80,856,800 and to the voluntary sector properties valued at €15,060,000.

The Western Province contribution of €5,000,000.00 together with accrued interest of €78,088.93 was given to the fund.

Two school properties valued at €4,706,800.00 are in the process of being handed over to DES. Other properties were sold and proceeds donated to the Statutory Fund. To date €1,679,258.60 has been donated.



Four properties valued at €2,175,000.00 have been given free of charge to the Voluntary sector.

A valuable property in Galway has been transferred to COPE and a further one pledged to the State has yet to be completed.

The resources of the Congregation which are in the trusteeship of the Provinces are the product of the voluntary commitment and labour of individual Sisters who served their local communities over the past 170 years. Throughout the Congregation's history, the Sisters numbering more than 12,780 have donated all of their resources, including salaries, towards the mission of our Congregation and it is this voluntary giving which has enabled all of its endeavours. Their salaries and stipends also contributed to the purchasing of the properties which were sold in order that they could make these large cash donations.

Financial Support

In 2014 the Charity contributed:

€88,500.00 to *Towards Healing*

€2,000.00 to *Towards Peace*.

€25,000.00 was paid to support families.

Additional Information:



2015

Two properties were sold and €329,000 was transferred to DES.

The Charity contributed €67,179 to *Towards Healing* and € 21,380 was paid to support families. €20,000 was paid for the purchase of freehold (Redress Expense).

2016

To date €2,008,258.60 has been donated.

The Charity contributed €62,109 to *Towards Healing* and €15,000 was paid to support families of former residents. The counsellor appointed to work with former residents finished. However the Congregational archivist continues to deal with all enquiries and meets with former residents as necessary.

2017

The Charity contributed €53,231 to *Towards Healing* and €14,000 was paid to support families of former residents.

2018

As part of the voluntary contribution following the Ryan Report, the Charity

1. Transferred the Primary and Secondary Schools in Ennistymon to DES as a site for a new Community School
2. Seamount College and Secondary School, Kinvara was transferred to DES for the Secondary School under the trusteeship of the Galway Diocese
3. Transferred €37,637 to DES – the proceeds from sale of land in Ballinrobe, less fees.

The Charity paid €650,000 to DES as part of the Redress Scheme.

The Charity contributed €70,000 to *Towards Healing*.

€41,000 was paid to support families of former residents.



In 2019

As part of the Voluntary Contribution following the Ryan Report, the Charity donated Lenaboy Castle plus 0.97 acres of land to Galway City Council as an Arts and Culture Centre for young people. In 2019 a further €750,000 was transferred to Galway City Council for the refurbishment of the building. €700,000 of this amount had been awarded to Mercy Sisters Western Province in a court case with the HSE. In addition the Sisters granted €50,000 towards this project.

€70,000.00 was contributed to the counselling service *Towards Healing*
 €33,835 was paid to support families of former residents
 €31,200 was paid to the Safeguarding Manager

In 2020

€40,000.00 was contributed to the counselling service *Towards Healing*
 €19,030 paid to support families of former residents
 €31,200 was paid to the Safeguarding Manager

In 2021

€40,000.00 was contributed to the counselling service *Towards Healing*
 €36,147 paid to support families of former residents
 €31,200 was paid to the Safeguarding Manager

In 2022

€40,000.00 was contributed to the counselling service *Towards Healing*
 €39,471 paid to support families of former residents
 €31,200 was paid to the Safeguarding Manager

