



**Congregation of
the
Sisters of Mercy**



South African Province

Report 2022

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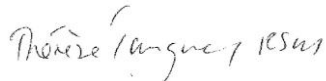
1. STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The Provincial Leader and the Provincial Leadership team are required to prepare for each Financial Year, financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Province and of the incoming resources and application of resources for that year. In preparing those financial statements, they are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- Prepare financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that this basis applies

The Provincial leader and the Provincial Leadership Team are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Province and to enable them to ensure that the Financial Statements comply with statutory requirements. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and protection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved on behalf of the Provincial Leadership Team:



.....
Provincial

.....
Assistant Provincial

20 October 2023

20 October 2023

.....
Date

.....
Date

2. REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Name of Charity:	Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy South African Province	
Public Benefit Number:	PBO18/11/13/2761	
Address of Principal Office:	South Africa Province Sisters of Mercy South Africa Province 19 Sturdee Avenue Rosebank Johannesburg 2196 South Africa	
Provincial Leadership Team:	Sr. Thérèse Tangney Sr. Colleen Wilkinson Sr. Chrissie McGettrick Sr. Mirriam Senatsi	Provincial Leader Assistant Provincial Leader Provincial Team Member Provincial Team Member
Provincial Treasurer:	Sr. Chrissie McGettrick	
Independent Auditors:	MFG Accountants 457 Rodericks Road Lynwood Pretoria 0081	
Principal Bankers:	FNB Box 52005 Saxonwold 2132	
Investment Managers Financial Advisors:	Mr. A Heynen BDO (Pty) Ltd 22 Wellington Road Parktown Johannesburg 2193	
Solicitors:	Fasken Martineau Inanda Greens 54 Wierda Road West Sandton 2196	

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1 Our History

The Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy is an International Roman Catholic Religious Congregation. The Sisters of Mercy owe their origin to Catherine McAuley who was born into an 18th Century Dublin (Ireland) where there was a great divide between a privileged minority who held power and influence and the vast majority who lived in very poor conditions. Catherine, influenced by her Christian faith used her inheritance to set up a Centre in Baggot Street, Dublin, Ireland from which she and her early companions responded to the needs of people who were suffering disadvantage. From the beginning, they saw the necessity of providing basic education as a way of enabling people to improve their lot. They also responded to the need to improve healthcare in the city. In the years that followed their founding the Sisters of Mercy focused on providing education and healthcare and consequently established and ran schools and hospitals and cared in various ways for the needs of poor people.

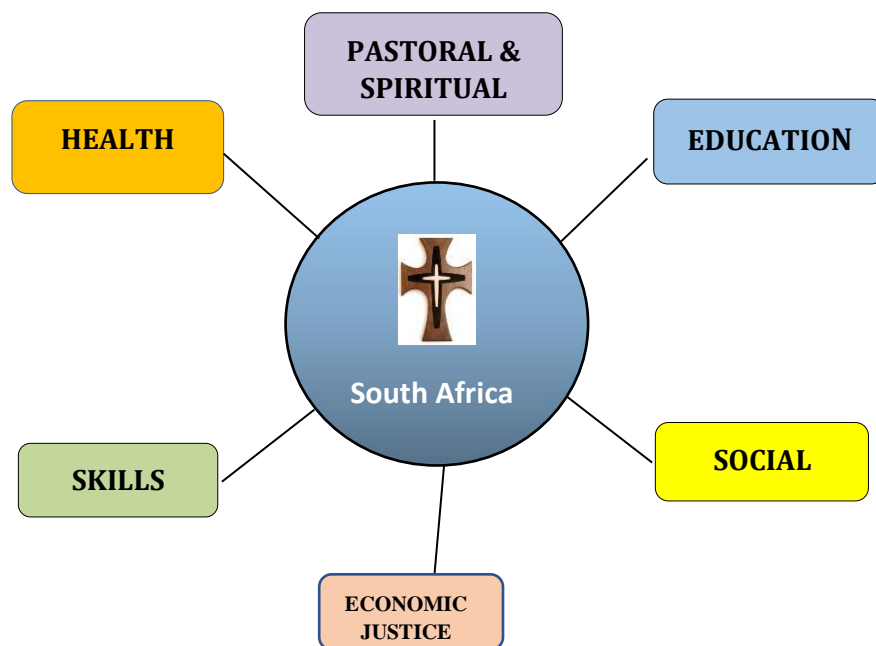


3.2 Our Mission Today

When the Sisters first came to South Africa in 1897 they opened a school in Mafeking. But the outbreak of the Anglo Boer War in 1899 saw the military take possession of the convent and the sisters nursed the wounded soldiers of both sides. That response to a need has served as a template over the years and as new needs emerged the Sisters responded.

Today the Sisters are involved with many co-workers in education, shelters for homeless people, skills training, nutrition programmes, HIV and Aids programmes, the support of orphans and vulnerable children, countering trafficking in persons, promoting spirituality, pastoral care, visitation of prisoners, working for justice and helping those in need. Now that the age profile of the Sisters has increased the need to care for the frail and infirm has become a necessity.

One of the underlying principles that motivates the Sisters has been well described by Sr J Regan RSM, *“The role of the enabler, as it was for Catherine McAuley, is to allow the people to choose what course of action they are able to take, and then to walk with them, supporting and resourcing them in every possible way along their journey to self-reliance and change.”*



3.3 Our Present Structure

In 1994, the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy (Ireland) was formed by the union of twenty-seven autonomous Mercy Congregations, formerly of Ireland and South Africa. The Congregation is currently comprised of six Provinces – four in Ireland and two others in Kenya and South Africa. The United States is a Region. The purpose of this union was to ensure greater effectiveness in the mission of mercy. The Constitutions of the new

Congregation were approved by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life in 1995.

3.4 South African Province

In 1897, the community of the Sisters of Mercy of Strabane, Ireland, acceding to the request of Bishop Anthony Gaughren OMI, Vicar Apostolic in Kimberley, South Africa, undertook to make a foundation in Mafeking. Accordingly, on 24th September five sisters, accompanied by four postulants, left Ireland and reached Cape Town on 17th October 1897. The first Convent of Mercy in Africa was opened in Mafeking in the diocese of Kimberley on the 15th February 1898. Convents were established in the diocese of Johannesburg from 1907, Archdiocese of Pretoria from 1923 and the diocese of Marianhill from 1965. These communities, and all those which have grown from them over the years, constituted one Congregation of Pontifical Right, under the title of Sisters of Mercy Johannesburg.

In 1994 this Congregation became a founding member of the new Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy and is now the South African Province of this Congregation.

In December 2022, there were twenty-eight members, coming from four different countries and living in five communities.

4. OUR MERCY MISSION

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 especially the poor and deprived” Constitutions n. 104

4.1 Object of the Public Benefit Organisation

The object of the PBO is:

- The advancement of religion
- The alleviation of poverty
- The support of those in need spiritually as well as materially

The charity aims to support the religious and other charitable works carried out in the name of the Province and to care for the members of the Province throughout their lives.

We do this through the Activities and Ministries of the Province in the following areas:

1. Community living – 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

5. STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

5.1 Nature of Governing Document

The governing instrument of the South African 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 is one of six Provinces and one region in the Congregation (Ireland) and is a Public Benefit Organisation (PBO Number 18/11/13/2761).

The governmental structure of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy involves a number of interconnected 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.

The PBO is governed by the Provincial Leader and the Provincial Leadership Team who are elected every six years by members of the Province. The Provincial Leadership Team are the Trustees of the PBO. 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. The Trustees are members of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy and as such their living and personal costs are borne by the Charity. They receive no remuneration for their services as Trustees.

5.2 Organisational Structure and Decision-making

The Provincial Leader and members of the Provincial leadership team are the trustees of the PBO. With regard to decision-making the trustees take responsibility for the overall running of the PBO. The trustees meet on a regular basis to review developments with regard to the PBO and its activities. Every six years members are involved in a long meeting – called a Chapter- a period of reflection and prayer, evaluation and planning with a focus on the development of policies and effective use of resources in an assessment of current and future needs.

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. There are systems of accountability 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 PBO under the direction of the Provincial Leader and her team. The majority of the income of the PBO comes from the Members' stipends and pensions, contributions from our schools, donations and income from investments. The stipend and pension incomes are voluntarily donated to the Province by the members in accord with their vow of poverty.

5.3 Collaboration and Partnership

It is the policy of the Charity to work in partnership and collaboration with their ministry colleagues, statutory and voluntary bodies, other religious Congregations and parish and diocesan groups in serving the local and wider community. In some instances, members are employed by these organisations, whilst in other cases they work as volunteers.

The PBO is affiliated to LCCL, a support body for Religious Congregations, which aims to bring a gospel-based voice in relating to the issues of our world. An annual fee, based on the number of members, is contributed by each participating group.

5.4 Risk Management

The Trustees undertake a risk assessment on an annual basis and monitor progress on a half yearly basis. This process is supported by the Finance Group and our Legal Advisers. The Trustees identified the following as being the principal risk to which the Province is exposed:

i) Governance & Management

The Trustees have experienced difficulty in securing competent staff for management. This risk is being mitigated by ensuring ongoing training and mentoring. In some instances, the tasks will be outsourced to a suitable agency.

ii) Operational

The Trustees are very aware of the inherent risks with regard to the NPO's which provide shelter to the homeless. This is mitigated by the appointment of a Health and Safety Officer with the mandate to monitor the Health and Safety Policy in each venue.

iii) Finance

The Trustees consider variability of investment returns on the investment funds to be a major financial risk. This is mitigated by the constant monitoring of the investments by the investment advisor who regularly updates the Trustees.

The Provincial General Fund Accounts and the Accounts of the Five Communities were all Audited in 2022. Our auditors did an independent review of the Provincial General Account and the accounts of the five communities

5.5 Policies

The Trustees, in collaboration with the Congregational Leadership Team ensure that, policies and good practice guidelines are developed, circulated and implemented and that these are regularly evaluated and updated. The Trustees take steps to ensure that Province is fully compliant with all legislative requirements.

The Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy has a Safeguarding Policy in place, it has been reviewed regularly. The policy aims to encourage adequate awareness and best practice

among all members of the Congregation, and those working for them, to ensure that all children and vulnerable adults are safeguarded from abuse of any kind. The Province is committed to a culture of safeguarding and to ensuring compliance with best practice in this area. The Trustees are proactive in complying with civil and ecclesiastical requirements for safeguarding in South Africa. The Trustees review annually the implementation of its Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

The PBO has further policies and guidelines on Stewardship, Health and Safety and the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults.

5.6 Property

“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” (Const. no 119).

“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 lifestyle and to balance concern for our future with support and compassion for poor and needy people” (Const. no 118).

We are committed to a lifestyle reflecting the fact that all our possessions are held in trust for the mission of the Congregation. As property trustees, we aim to promote the mission, addressing our own 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.

5.7 NPO's (Not for Profit Organisations)

Within the Province various ministries are registered as Not for Profit Organisations (NPO's) This would include the schools, the shelters and nutrition programmes.

The Trustees support the work of the respective Boards of Directors and engage and meet with them on a regular basis through their Trustees representative and at the annual general meetings of the respective companies. The importance of good corporate governance has been to the forefront in these NPO's since their establishment.

The Sisters of Mercy own the properties from which the majority of these NPOs operate. These properties are leased to the NPOs rent free by the Sisters of Mercy.

6. PUBLIC BENEFIT

The Trustees consider that the activities and achievements of the PBO illustrate that the aims of the PBO are carried out for public benefit.

The beneficiaries are people of South Africa without distinction on grounds of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, nationality, ethnic identity, political or religious opinion. Public benefit is delivered through religious activities, financial and other aid, ecological awareness and a variety of services provided to families, older people and children and to people experiencing hunger and poverty.

7. ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The Activities of the PBO fall into the following areas:

- Community Living and the Advancement of Religion
- Healthcare and the Compassionate Care of the sick and Those in Need
- Relief of Poverty, Promotion of Education, Justice and other charitable activities

The Advancement of Religion (Specific Ministry)	17 Sisters
Healthcare & the Compassionate Care of those who are sick and are in need	9 Sisters
Relief of Poverty, Promotion of Education, Justice & other Charitable activities	14 Sisters

All Members engage in Community Living and the Advancement of Religion



7.1 Community Living and the Advancement of Religion

The South African Province of the Sisters of Mercy is a province of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy, Ireland, where the nurturance of faith and the development of spirituality are of prime importance to the Trustees. All aspects of the PBO's work involve the advancement of religion. Many of the members seek to respond to the hunger for God in society by promoting faith development and spiritual growth.

Those members of the Province who earn stipends, or receive pensions donate them to the PBO and therefore have no independent means of support. They have devoted all of their adult years and their earnings to the furtherance of its charitable objectives. Many also give their services free in their various ministries and continue to do so well beyond retirement age. The work of the PBO includes both the upkeep and up-skilling and retraining of members of the Province so that they will be able to continue in their service to the public.

The Trustees continue to assess the PBO's work and to search for better ways of carrying out this ministry in today's world.

The Trustees give careful consideration to the age profile of the members of the Province and the impact of this on the work of these members, the property requirements and the financial implications of an ageing group.

The work in this area is mainly carried out through community living and ministry in the local parishes, our schools, shelters and places of ministry. Through their living and praying the Sisters support people in their daily needs. They are committed to daily personal prayer as well as to a pattern of communal prayer suited to their local communities.

Other areas mentioned include:

- Contributing to the Faith Community through an active participation in Faith Development Projects
- Providing opportunities for Theological Reflection and Spiritual Growth
- Providing Retreat Opportunities
- Spiritual Direction / Accompaniment
- Human Development using PRH
- Prison Visitation
- Catechetics in Schools and Parishes

The Province has a wide variety of activities that respond to people's need for meaning and their search for God. In all the places where we live there are Sisters involved in pastoral outreach, such as visiting the sick in their homes, in hospitals and in hospices; providing opportunities for prayer guidance and accompaniment to help deepen the Christian call to holiness; bereavement support; prison visitation; helping children grow in their faith.

The Ministries are aimed at a deepening of faith and developing a relationship with God. The members collaborate with others, not only in faith formation and Sacramental preparation but in all community activities, supporting and encouraging the development of unity and leadership among the people. Centering Prayer, Divine Mercy, and Retreats enrich the membership and those with whom the Sisters share these Ministries. A number of sisters offer spiritual direction or accompany individuals seeking to deepen their knowledge of God and discerning their spiritual path.

Personality and Human Relations (PRH)



Numerous PRH WORKSHOPS were offered by the PRH educators in the Provinces of Natal, Mpumalanga and Gauteng. In Natal, the participants were mostly religious women and some priests. In Mpumalanga, work was done with married couples and in Gauteng, many of the workshops were done with the materially deprived, quite a number of whom were homeless. In Gauteng Province, principally in Johannesburg, intensive PRH training to help five persons qualify as PRH Accompanists was prioritised. This objective was realised and these five trainees received certification from PRH International enabling them to practise as accompanists for persons who wish to work on their growth using PRH methods. Ongoing formation of these qualified persons is a requirement of the PRH School and will be provided on-line by PRH International.

Pastoral Care and Chaplaincy in Prisons

Prison Ministry 2022

During 2022, the Prison Ministry at Losperfontein and ODI Prison continued. Three times a week prayer services and discussion sessions were held at the prisons, and on Sundays there were Eucharistic Services. On occasion, a priest was invited to come to the prison to celebrate the Holy Eucharist and there were opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The Prison Associates Prayer Group of nine people was developed.

The members of this Association pray in their churches and in their homes for blessing and comfort for people in prison.

Poverty, in some cases, accounts for the sad situation of people who get on the wrong side of the law. Prisoners were given phone cards and personal necessities.

Their families were assisted with donations of food and school transport. A retreat weekend was held for the Prison Associates. The University of Pretoria offers a programme that seeks to help young people who are addicted to drugs. There were meetings twice a week and discussion sessions were organised in an effort to guide the prisoners towards better choices.



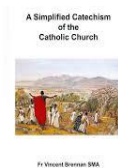
Catechetics in Schools and Parishes

A catechetical programme outlined by the Archdiocese of Johannesburg and Archdiocese of Pretoria was conducted for young people in all Mercy Schools.

Similarly, in Regina Mundi, Soweto and in the Winterveldt Parishes of Emmanuel and Good Shepherd, the diocesan programme was conducted. Young people were prepared for reception of the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation. Retreats were arranged for the various age groups and they had the opportunity of attending Liturgical Services during arranged school hours and with their catechists at weekends.

Mercy Ethos events were encouraged during winter time, at Easter and at Christmas when those less well-off were provided with food parcels and special gifts. Catechetical books and materials were purchased for the benefit of the young people.

Nurturing faith and developing the spirituality are of prime importance to the PBO members. Classes in catechetics are offered in all of the schools belonging to the PBO. The children are taught their faith and have the opportunity to prepare for and attend liturgical services.



In Winterveldt, nature walks were a particular take, while art and demonstrations of texts were deemed of particular interest. Stories from the Scriptures were the highlight of each lesson and the children were encouraged to imitate the life of Jesus in His kindness and compassion. Sometimes little plays were performed to emphasise content.

It is a great privilege to be afforded the opportunity to engage with our amazing children at such an early stage in their young lives and we hope and pray they will experience the joy of being a Catholic.

7.2 Healthcare and the Compassionate Care of the Sick

“Catherine McAuley generated in her Sisters a deep concern and compassionate care for the sick and the dying. This concern engages us in the compassionate care of the sick, manifesting to them Christ’s healing love.”

(Constitutions Par 43)

The wellbeing activities, healthcare, care of the dying and the bereaved engage many of the members of the PBO. Health and wellbeing are about a way of living and being that enables us to live life to the full. It is at the heart of Mercy Life and ministry. Members of the PBO are involved in this work in community care and within the community houses.

The Elderly and Vulnerable

Our Elderly and Frail Citizens

Holy Cross Home is a residential frail care centre based in Pretoria. The Home is owned and managed by the Holy Cross Sisters. Some members of the PBO are resident there. The Home accommodates about forty residents on the ground floor, many of whom are handicapped as the result of strokes that were not attended to timeously. Upstairs are about thirty priests and sisters who need care.

Different members of the Province visit the sisters regularly. A member of the PBO visits the Home twice a week. On Monday mornings time is spent with the residents on the ground floor. There are a variety of activities but the main purpose is to provide a space for them to come together and interact.

On Thursday there is a reflective meeting for the priests and sisters. The Sisters who come are elderly but full of life and enthusiasm. After very active lives, they feel cut off and are eager to hear what’s happening in the country and in the church.



Each morning begins with a time for prayer and thanksgiving. It is admirable that people whose lives are very limited can be so grateful for the small things.

There is a time for exercises and this enables them to get rid of some of the tension that causes pain. They enjoy singing, playing musical instruments and making simple decorations.

These activities provide a vehicle for us to journey together, both the fun parts and the sad parts. Death is a frequent visitor at Holy Cross and it is difficult for those who are left behind as they mourn the passing of yet another friend or sister. Our regular meetings allow for us to face this aspect of life together.

Joseph Gerard Home, founded in the late eighties by the late Rev. Fr. R. Cairns OMI and the St Hubert Catholic Church in Alexander township, Johannesburg is a residential home for elderly persons from disadvantaged backgrounds. It has accommodation for thirty-

six people. There are three enrolled nurses and eight full-time caregivers as well as the support staff. Groups of Social Welfare students are welcomed regularly as volunteer workers and others offer their help.

For the past eleven years the Mercy Sisters have been involved in a small way in supporting the residents by visiting them and on some occasions accessing funding for particular requirements of the Home through Mercy Congregational sources, all of which were well appreciated.

2022 was a particularly difficult year for the Home in terms of finances which impacted on the general sustainability of the home and even threatened its continuation.

Plans for an updating of the staff in general could not be implemented, however four previously untrained carers followed a Certificate course with The Lady of the Lamp Training School and one Security Guard upgraded his status. The residents were supplied with items for personal grooming and transport was funded for them to attend a social function. Extra percussion instruments for the residents which they use when exercising, were purchased.

Because of insecurity around Covid 19 and its follow-ups, visiting the residents was not feasible and we had contact only with the Manageress, Social worker and Staff members – mainly to encourage them and give them hope for the future which seemed very bleak.

Nutritional Support programmes

Food security has long been an issue in South Africa, with 11,6% of the population (approx. 6.5m people) undernourished in 2022 according to STATS SA.

The PBO was engaged in three nutritional support programmes – one in Soweto, one in Rosebank Johannesburg and one in Winterveldt. In total 1390 people were assisted with either dry food parcels or full cooked meals. The people benefitting from the programmes were generally unemployed families, homeless people not accommodated at the shelters and in many cases people who could not avail of a Government social grant because of their status in the country.

Sisters of Mercy Skills and Nutrition Centre in Soweto

Since 1985 the PBO has had a Nutrition Centre in Soweto where food parcels are given to a large number of families on a regular basis.

Food parcels continued to be distributed to 515 families living in the informal sectors of Dlamini extensions 1 and 2, Rockville, Chiawelo, Phiri, Chicken Farm, Kliptown, Senaoane, White City, Fred Clark and Lehae. Some young people attended classes in computer literacy.

Thusanang Nutrition Programme

The PBO seeks to go beyond traditional aid models, and where possible to establish integrated food security and nutrition programmes. This is achieved by providing skills training programmes which, though small, see some families proceed to self-employment, while in Winterveldt, the development of food gardens in five areas adds much needed dietary support.

As Covid restrictions decreased and desperation increased around the first few weeks of 2021, the people who suffered most during the pandemic were glad to know that the Nutrition Programme was back on track again in 2022. Meeting with friends again was a very positive experience for people who had adhered very strictly to social distancing during the pandemic, and it was heart-warming to observe the chatter as the gardens came alive again while the people hoed and planted. Very generous donations of dry food continued to come from Johannesburg and Pretoria, and especially from the Mercy Schools in those cities. Much needed clothing also arrived to bring relief. The people who live and work at the recycling area – called Las Vegas - were helped in taking their goods to sell when the bakkie, supplied by the project, arrived every Thursday to collect the recycled items. Some money was earned from the hard and humble work. We held Board of Management meetings and an AGM during the course of the year, and remained compliant with the Directorate of Non-Profit Organisation by submitting the required narrative and financial reports.



HIV AND AIDS - 2022

Raising awareness and education about HIV and AIDS is part of the ongoing work of the PBO.

Rural communities and the people living in the urban areas are equally in need of this information.

KOPANO LERATO OVC and GENDER BASED VIOLENCE PROGRAMME – 2022

Kopano Lerato OVC has initiated a Gender Based Violence Programme with the aim of minimising the high rate of Gender Based Violence cases reported in Winterveldt and nearby areas. Working on this programme was a team of five Community Advocates, with support from CATHCA (Catholic Health Care Association), the PBO and local stakeholders from different Departments.

On a monthly basis the following services were conducted through the GBV programme at community meetings, churches, schools, NGOs, clinics and at homes.

- Gender Based Violence awareness and campaigns
- Community dialogue
- Victim support group
- Couple sessions
- Individual and family counselling
- Referral to different Government departments e.g. Justice Dept, Health & Welfare Department, the South African Police.
- Victim empowerment

Through the programme women, children, men, people living with HIV, foreign nationals and differently abled persons were reached. 55% of the Winterveldt population have been brought into the programme and change of attitudes and behaviour are monitored and observed during support sessions.

Besides the introduction in 2020 of our GBV Programme, the comprehensive HIV Services continued. Care and support were given to the orphaned and vulnerable children in the programme. House to house visits to the homes of the children and their families also continued with special attention to the family's health. Working together with the local clinic, HIV Counselling and testing, as well as distribution of ARV's, also continued.

The programmes wish to continue to provide a holistic, effective and compassionate response to the Community in Winterveldt.



GBV Awareness Campaign

7.3 Relief of Poverty, Promotion of Education, Justice and other charitable activities

Our foundress generated a deep concern in her sisters for those at risk in society - this concern engages us in Christian education. It urges us to be with, and for, the poor and distressed, working for social justice and well-being, seeking to bring rich and poor together in mutual love and service.

(Const. no 43)

The Activities under this heading include the following

- Schools
- Adult Education and Skills
- Shelters for Homeless People in Johannesburg
- Home for abused and trafficked women
- Economic Justice, peace and reconciliation
- Involvement in critical local and global issues.

SCHOOLS

Education was very dear to the heart of Catherine McAuley. Wherever new Mercy foundations were established, a first priority of the Sisters was to make education available, especially to the children of those who were poor. Inspired by Catherine our approach to education has been the holistic development of each person. Through Education the members are continuously updating according to the emerging need of society.

After the many changes and obstacles experienced during 2020 and 2021, the schools all agreed that 2022 was a much more settled school year.

The academic year was not interrupted by lockdowns or having to limit the learners' attendance to allow for social distancing. The learners were able to attend the full school calendar which also allowed them to catch up on any gaps in the curriculum which could have been experienced in the previous two years.

Even better, the learners were able to resume sports and social activities that required them to be in close proximity to one another. The negative aspects, however, were that learners had lost parents and family to Covid and some parents had lost their jobs due to the economic situation which meant that the numbers of learners attending the Mercy Schools were reduced. The schools engaged the assistance of counsellors to assist the learners as they were still dealing with quite a few issues which had been brought on by Covid.

Overall, the schools need to be commended that despite restricted budgets, the teachers and support staff presented the quality education that Catherine McAuley envisioned.



Mayfair Convent Primary School

**St Teresa's Mercy
Primary School**



Sisters of Mercy Schools' Statistics 2022

SCHOOL	MAYFAIR CONVENT PRIMARY SCHOOL	McAULEY HOUSE MERCY SCHOOL	IONA CONVENT MERCY SCHOOL	ST MATTHEW'S MERCY SCHOOL	ST TERESA'S MERCY SCHOOL
Primary School	326	429	211	675	355
High School	-	311	288	637	235
Teachers	16	40	31	45	55
Social Workers	1	1	1	1	2
Admin Staff	1	5	2	6	7
Bursars	1	2	2	1	4
Support Staff	6	14	1	8	20

Shelters for Homeless People in Johannesburg

***“Ask not what it is about the homeless poor that accounts for their condition
Ask rather what it is about the rest of us that allowed a social system go so badly
awry”***

Three Mercy Shelters cater for 220 people nightly at the crisis and transitional stages of homelessness in the city of Johannesburg. The shelter management is not in a position to cater for the settlement stage which is considered the third stage in addressing this social issue and which, in fact, seems to be spiralling out of control. That would require interventions by the Department of Social Development and Department of Housing and City Management and that is yet to be attempted. The Mercy intervention therefore is a very small but hopefully significant effort to help people who suffer the degradation of homelessness.

A Board of Management consisting of 8 people oversaw the effort in 2022 while a staff component of 33 including two social workers and 4 skills trainers helped people find a way forward in their lives.

A bookkeeper met monthly with the finance team of sisters and shelter managers, while the finances were audited with a registered auditing firm. The Department of Social Development contributed a large fund for skills development and some significant results were observed.

The night shelters offered full cooked evening meals, light breakfasts, sleeper couches and bedding, showers and laundry facilities, while the social workers provided psycho-social support and a Sister of Mercy and assistant provided an opportunity for people to engage with the PRH programme.

The Sisters of Mercy Solidarity Trust sent us a very welcome and very significant contribution in 2022 and this enabled us to continue the shelter programme as well as

develop the nutrition programme for people from the street who cannot be accommodated due to lack of space. A full cooked meal was served each morning at 10h00 for 120 people daily, while blankets, showers and clothing were also provided. Safeguarding policy is in place.

The Mercy Ethos was encouraged and the safeguarding policy prioritised as we went forward in our endeavour to follow Catherine's sentiments regarding the poor in Kingstown.

Involvement in critical local and global issues.

Mercy House Pretoria

Mercy House in Pretoria offers protection to survivors of gender-based violence and survivors of trafficking in persons. It is registered with the Department of Social Development to accommodate twenty-one women with their small children. 2022 saw a relaxation on the Covid restrictions and training workshops were resumed. Awareness campaigns were held throughout the year. Outreach to the impoverished areas continued. Soup and sandwiches were given out to the people in those areas while the staff of Mercy House talked to them about the crimes of gender-based violence, human trafficking and HIV and AIDS.



Fabric painting – a skill taught at Mercy House

Economic Justice

Economic Justice is one of the sectors that the PBO focused on so that the resources of faith, the strength of the economy and the opportunities of our time could be used to shape a society that better protects the dignity and basic rights of all people. By the raising of people's awareness of the many and complex issues, people were enabled to choose a better course of action.

Through the various ministries in education, social and pastoral work the members are dedicated to reducing poverty and engendering respect by enabling people to take charge of their own lives.

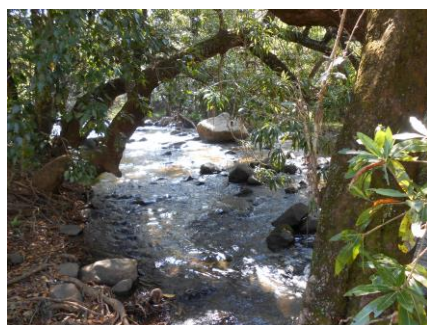
Climate change, Global Issues and Ecology

The effects of climate change have been experienced first-hand. The city of Durban and its surrounding areas were flooded during torrential rains that caused rivers to flood, trees and water pipes to be uprooted and many houses in informal settlements to be washed away. The death toll stood at 256, with some people never found.

Efforts were made to mitigate climate change by recycling whatever could be recycled, using single use plastic to make eco bricks which were used to build houses, clinics and even some classrooms.

Sisters were encouraged to take part in the various events organised by *Laudato Si* for the Season of Creation which began on 1 September and culminated on the feast of St Francis, 4 October.

We were all also encouraged to pray with the Cosmic Advent Wreath during the season of Advent, helping to bring the Cosmos into Advent and the Cosmic Christ into Christmas. Our aim was to keep ourselves informed about Climate Change and its destructive power, to pray for those adversely affected by this phenomenon caused by our over consumption of goods, disconnection from and disregard of creation and its bounty. We watched a series on television, produced in South Africa, "Blue Gold," about water and its pollution as well as the efforts made by a number of people to safeguard and clean our rivers and dams. Contacts were encouraged to watch it as well so that we can all become part of the solution.



8. Financial Review

8.1 Results for the year 2022

A summary of the year's results can be found on page 6 of the consolidated accounts. During the year the total income amounted to R16,589,739. This was made up mainly of donations from schools. The other major items include investment incomes and pension donated by the Sisters of Mercy.

8.2 Investments

At 31 December 2022, the PBO had investments of R42,937,816. Refer to page 10 of the financial Statement The purpose of these funds is to provide income to promote the objectives of the PBO and to provide capital growth in the reserves over the medium term. They are invested with a conservative investment strategy. The objectives for the investments are as follows:

- ✚ To provide an annual income for the PBO
- ✚ To preserve the capital value of the portfolio in real terms.
- ✚ To generate a real return, depending on conditions in financial markets
- ✚ To achieve the above targets while utilizing the PBO's ethical investment policy.

The investment funds are under the management of BDO South Africa. These 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. The Trustees, with their Investment advisors, review the investments on a regular basis.

9. Future Plans and Objectives

The Provincial Leader and Team will review needs and spending plans and make every effort to manage the existing assets as efficiently as possible in order to generate the income necessary to achieve the PBO's aims.

The Charity plans to continue to give support to various works of the Charity, to their members who work in them, as well as to their colleagues and collaborators with whom they work.

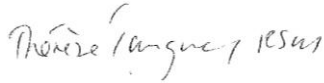
The members of the Province are the mainstay of the PBO. They are its chief agents as well as the source of the funding available to meet its obligations. Devising and monitoring adequate systems to support life in their communities is an on-going consideration and challenge in a time of unprecedented change in our demographics. There will be continuing commitment to the on-going care of the members of the Charity. Concern for frail older members will require the ongoing review of community houses and the assessment of their suitability for ageing communities. Where necessary nursing care will be accessed for Members requiring full-time care. At the same time the PBO will be committed to resourcing active sisters and those who may join the Province to continue the mission of Mercy here in South Africa with all its beauty and all its needs. The PBO will be doing this in collaboration with other Mercy Provinces under the leadership of our Congregational Team.

9.1 Charity wide objectives 2022

- Ongoing engagement with the mission and strategic direction of the Congregation as found in the Chapter Call of July 2018.
- Collaborate with Mercy International Association and Mercy Worldwide to examine the themes of eco justice and social justice in furtherance of the Mercy mission.
- Facilitate the members to undertake the Activities of the PBO.
- Collaborate with the Boards of all the Not for Profit Organisations (NPO's) in the revision of their Constitutions.
- Collaborate with the management in all the ministries to deepen the ethos and ensure that ongoing training is provided.
- Review the Insurance Cover in the communities and ministries.
- Continue to update health and safety measures in the Communities and Buildings.

- Ensure compliance in all the communities and ministries with the National and Legislative standards in Safe guarding.

Signed on behalf the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy, South African Province



Sr Thérèse Tangney



Sr Colleen Wilkinson

10. Statement of Financial Activities

INDEPENDENT REVIEW REPORT OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS OF MERCY SOUTH AFRICA 2022