



Trustees Report 2023

& Financial Statements



The Congregational Leadership
of The Sisters of Mercy



The Congregational Leadership of The Sisters of Mercy Trustees Report 2023

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INTRODUCTION

The Trustees present their Annual Report together with the Audited Financial Statements of The Congregational Leadership of the Sisters of Mercy (the "Congregational Leadership") for the year ended 31st December 2023. The Trustees of this Charity hold overall responsibility for the life and mission of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy. Their role is to guide, inspire, animate and unify the Congregation for Mission. They confirm that the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Congregational Leadership 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.

The Story 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.

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





The Sisters were to the fore in social work as it developed and did pioneering work in the area of addiction and social service centres in the past and more recently in the area of care of the earth .

Catherine knew that providing basic education would help people improve their lives. The Sisters of Mercy also recognized and responded to the need to improve healthcare.

In the years that followed their founding, the Sisters of Mercy established schools and hospitals and cared in whatever way possible for the needs of the people who were poorest.

Throughout Ireland, this outreach continued through the years in more formal settings such as orphanages, industrial schools, group homes as well as in after-care facilities for those who had left their direct care.

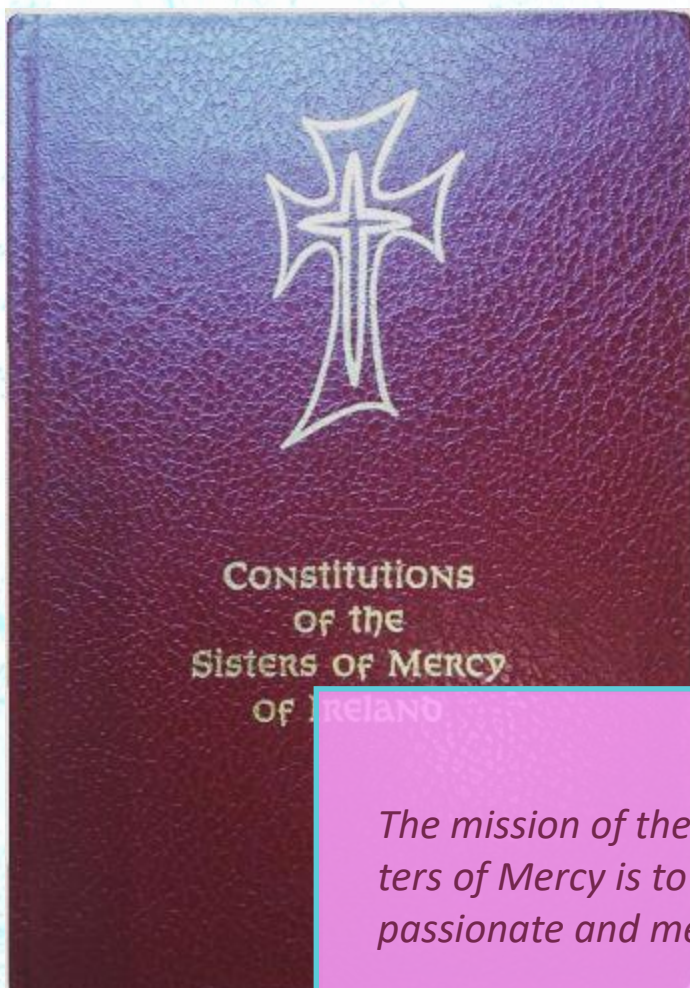
The Sisters of Mercy have been engaged in children's needs and development since the opening of the first House of Mercy in Baggot Street, Dublin in 1827.

WHERE WE ARE NOW

The Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy (headquarters in Dublin) has six Provinces and one Region; Four of these are in Ireland, one in Kenya, one in South Africa and a Region in the United States. South Central Province has a mission in Brazil. The Southern Province has a mission in Peru.



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 and especially for the poor and deprived.”

Constitutions 104 (1985)

PURPOSE/OBJECTS, ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS

Charitable Purpose

- ⊗ **Advancement of Religion**
- ⊗ **Relief of Poverty or Economic hardship including those in need Spiritually as well as Materially**

**We carry out the Objectives/
Purposes of the charity through the
following activities and ministries:**

1. Congregational Living and the advancement of Religion
2. Relief of Poverty, Promotion of Education, Justice and other Charitable Activities
3. Positive Impact Investing
4. Heritage including Archives and upkeep of Listed Assets

CONGREGATIONAL LIVING & THE ADVANCEMENT OF RELIGION

Summary View



ADVANCEMENT OF RELIGION

As the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy is a Religious Congregation, advancement of Religion is of prime importance to the Trustees. All aspects of the Charity's work involve the advancement of religion. The Trustees continue to assess the Charity's work and to search for appropriate ways of carrying out its mission in today's world in collaboration and partnership with others.



FORMATION IN THE CONGREGATION

The admission and formation of new members to the Congregation is an important aspect of our life and mission. The Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy are committed to inviting and accompanying women who are discerning a call by God to the Mercy way of life.

In 2023 members of the Congregational Leadership team visited Kenya where initial formation takes place. There are two sisters working in Vocation promotion in Kenya and in Ireland.

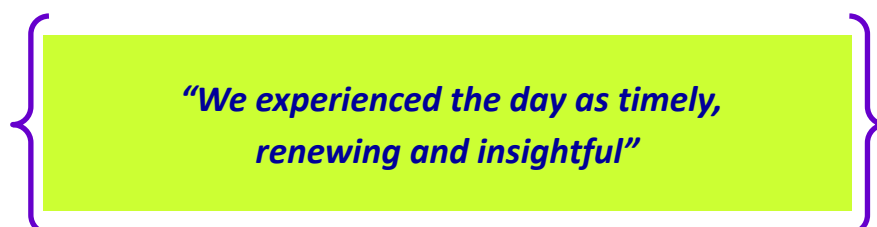
In Kenya the vocation promoter visited schools, colleges and universities. She organised 'Come and See' programs for those who showed an interest in exploring the Mercy way of life and one week live-in programs with aspirants.

In Ireland the Vocations Promoter received on average one enquiry every two weeks and has journeyed significantly with a small number of people in the past year.



During 2023 the Vocation Promoter worked closely with the leadership and those with technological skills in exploring the most relevant social media platforms to use in making Mercy visible to those who are searching and seeking.

In June of 2023 the Formation Resource person organised a one day workshop in the Mercy International Centre in Baggot Street for Sisters in leadership with responsibility for initial formation. This was facilitated by Mary Pat Garvin RSM from the U.S.A .





FORMATION IN THE CONGREGATION

They also attended Vocations Ireland Spring Conference which included a workshop entitled ***Crossing a Threshold to New Life: The Call to be Pioneers Once Again*** by Lynn M. Levo, CSJ

Members of the Initial Formation team in Kenya and the Formation Resource person attended a Continuing Education eCourse for Vocation & Formation Ministers facilitated by Sr. Mary Pat Garvin: **Words of Wisdom, Words of Grace** from September – December 2023.

Responding to our chapter call of 2018: ***“we are called to nourish and live the charism of mercy with others and within the whole community of life”*** . The Formation Resource person in her work with Mercy Associates/Circles/Emerging Lay Groups was involved in planning a visit by Camilla Lauricella, local facilitator for all associates in New Jersey, U.S.A. and Chair of the Advisory Council for Associates in the U.S.

“I really appreciated all the input at the meeting with Camilla and from members of the group last night. I found it very uplifting experience and thank you for all involved in organising it”.

“Following on from Camilla Lauricella’s inspiring talk about how she spreads Mercy last week, I am suggesting we support “Cuanlee Refuge” which provides safe and secure crisis accommodation for women and children experiencing domestic abuse.”

PROMOTION OF THE CAUSE FOR CANONISATION of Venerable Catherine McAuley

The Mercy Congregation in Ireland has primary responsibility for the promotion of Catherine McAuley's canonization cause. The work began in 1903, sixty years after the death of Catherine.

Requests for Prayers

During 2023 we received requests for prayers for people who are sick or in difficulty through the intercession of Venerable Catherine McAuley. The geographic range of these requests encompass Brazil, Guyana, and many heartrending requests from the USA.



This points to the continued fame for holiness of Venerable Catherine McAuley and the geographic spread of the attraction of the charism of Mercy.

Status of the Cause for Beatification

In relation to the status of the alleged healing attributed to prayer through the intercession of Venerable Catherine the work on this case continues. This case has been ongoing for a number of years now, the break for Covid 19 is not least among the reasons for the slow movement of the work on the alleged healing.

In 2023, the Postulator travelled to Rome to assess the progress of the cause since the **Revisione** stage of late 2022. In Rome she met with the person responsible for moving the cause forward and he put her in contact with the Secretary of the Dicastery.

From the Secretary of the Dicastery she learned that there was a moratorium on the movement of all historic causes except certain ones that have been earmarked for conclusion in 2023.

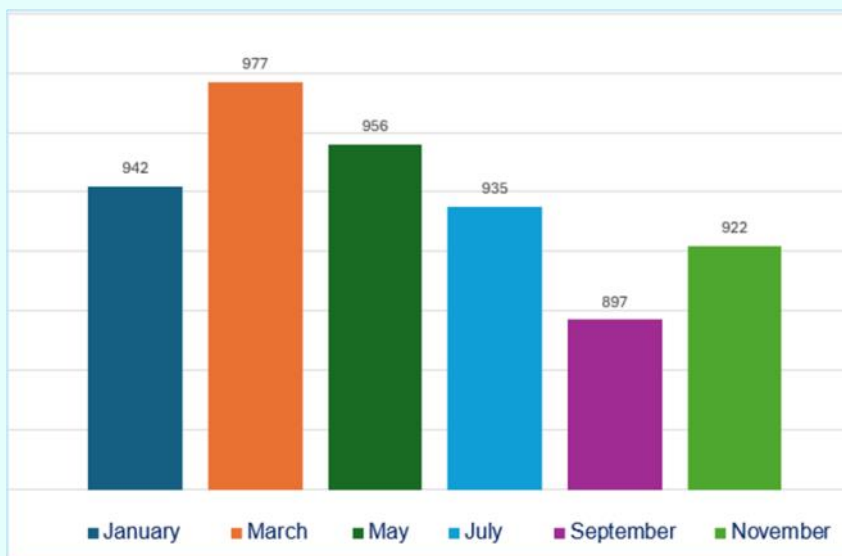
This means that the progression of the cause has been stalled for the past five months and there will be no movement for at least another couple of months. The reason is because of the amount of work that has to be done to bring a cause to conclusion is monumental. There is a big number of alleged miracles waiting to be processed and the Dicastery finds itself understaffed at this present time.

COMMUNICATION FOR MISSION

The importance of effective communications has never been more urgent in a world of war and broken relationships. The Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy, recognizing the essential ministry that is Communications, continued in 2023 to give priority focus to a quality of Communication that promotes dialogue, fosters relationship and educates for a just and peaceful world.

Among the many ways this was done was through Mercy Alive. Our bi-monthly Newsletter was widely read by membership and is a valuable instrument in connecting the various pathways of mission and ministry across the Congregation.

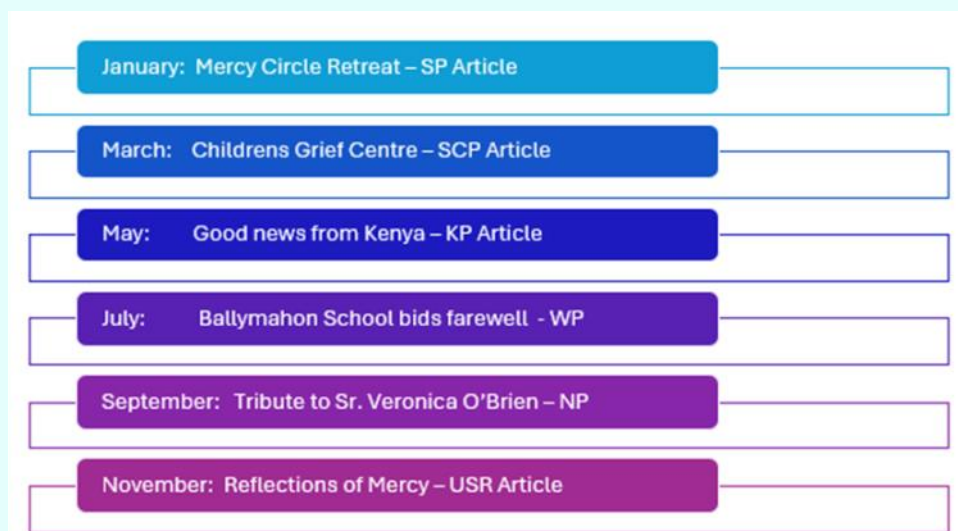
Mercy Alive Bi-Monthly Readers



Marron| NP

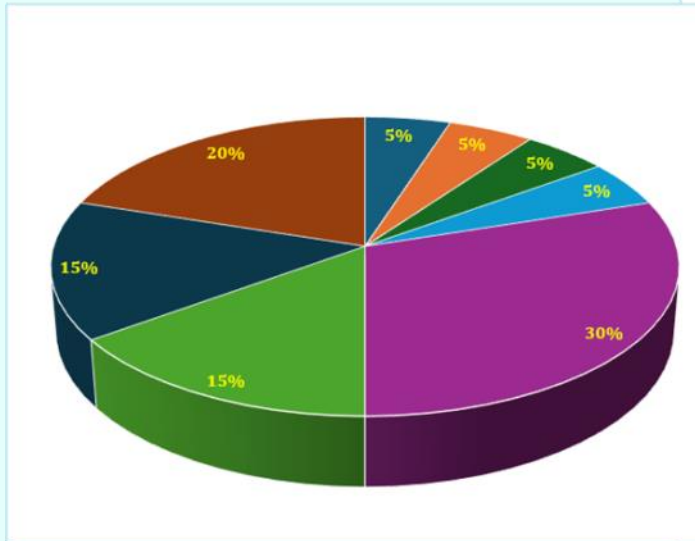
Mabel

The Most Popular Articles in 2023 were as follows:



COMMUNICATION FOR MISSION

Updating Website



- Overall Ministry section
- Resources Section
- Vocations Section
- Congregational Policies
- Provincial Ministries & History
- Vimeos, Slideshows and PowerPoint Presentations for Special Occasions
- Blogs on Sisters' Lives
- Thought for the Day

The Website is a space where we continued our endeavor to connect the pathways of the global community in weaving the spiritual, social, ecological and cultural threads. We observed that effective internal communication supported external communication with the wider audience.

Accepting that effective communication is at the heart of the unity and advancement of universal communion. The Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy strived to include a tone of inclusion, respect and friendship in all their articles; content that is current, educating and promotes well-being; call to address the critical issues of injustice of our time that threaten life on earth; and a reminder of the divine work of creation and our responsibility to reverence our common home.

“Communicating in a cordial manner means that those who read or listen to us are led to welcome our participation in the joys, fears, hopes and suffering of the women and men of our time.”

Pope Francis (57th World Day of Social Communication, 2023)

We continued in 2023 to avail of professional training through CWA and UISG. In their first International Meeting of Communication for Religious Life, UISG offered an opportunity for communications of various congregations across the world to deepen their commitment to the Church’s mission of communications.

**RELIEF OF POVERTY, PROMOTION OF EDUCATION,
JUSTICE & OTHER CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES**

Summary View



Relief of POVERTY,
Promotion of EDUCATION, JUSTICE and other ACTIVITIES
€1,023,056

MISSION DEVELOPMENT

LOKORI PRIMARY HEALTHCARE (PHC) PROGRAMME, KENYA

Located in the Turkana region, the LOKORI PHC does so much more than its title implies...

Catchment population of **11,000**



Each family unit has an average of 10 members



142 male HIV+ clients
1066 female HIV+ clients



300 frail and elderly supported with food each month



32 expectant mothers earned a living through making and selling new-born clothes



26-30 deliveries at the clinic each month



31 grandparents are caregivers for HIV+ orphans



232 members accessed loans through table banking



Access to Education facilitated for:
5 teenage mothers in secondary school
2 pregnant girls in primary school
4 child-brides rescued from early marriage



50 members in our AA group

THE DIFFERENCE WE MAKE

The Motto of our programme is

"Together we soar"

Lokori Green: Our commitment to changing the face of Lokori by colouring it green, feeding ourselves on the fresh vegetables we have grown, sitting under the cool shade of trees we have planted. We know our dream is very ambitious given that we are in a desert setting and it is hard work to create a farm from sand, rock and little water...

In this culture the girl/woman has no say over who marries her. In our project we are promoting another culture whereby girls are children, women are human beings with rights and dreams...

Courage is needed to take risks and not be afraid of facing the painful past – which may have wounded or broken us. Perhaps it was HIV infection and the pain of stigma and isolation, widowhood, domestic violence, lack of education... but we welcome all who reach out to us.

We look forward to a time when.....the primary occupation will not be **"where will the next meal come from"** and definitely a time when the length of queues of people looking for food rations will be a thing of the past.



COLLABORATION WITH & SUPPORT OF OTHER CHARITIES/GROUPS

In 2023 the Trustees of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy made substantial donations to a number of groups whose work is far reaching and in line with our charitable purposes but outside our personal reach.

unicef UNICEF

Africa's deadliest storm in recorded history, 'Storm Daniel', made landfall in the east of Libya on 10 September, bringing powerful winds and sudden torrential rainfall. The resulting flooding was disastrous, destroying infrastructure and sweeping away homes with families trapped inside. The port town of Derna was declared a disaster zone after two dams were breached, wiping out a quarter of the city. By the 5th October, reports indicated that 4,333 people died and 8,540 were still missing, which has also resulted in a high number of separated and unaccompanied children. The Trustees supported the work of UNICEF in Libya.

Donna M O'Donovan, UNICEF, wrote *"Sincere thanks to the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy for generously supporting UNICEF's emergency humanitarian response to the catastrophic flooding in Libya. I wish to formally acknowledge your kind donation of €10,000 in support of children and families whose lives have been devastated by the crisis."*

With the support of donors like you, UNICEF has so far airlifted 67 metric tonnes of emergency medical, nutrition and shelter supplies into Libya to support flood-affected communities.

Your kind donation will also help UNICEF to reach children and families traumatised by the disaster with vital psychosocial support.

Sincere thanks once again to the Trustees of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy for being there for children. Not only today but through your continued support over many years. Without the compassion and generosity of donors like you, none of UNICEF's lifesaving work would be possible".

COLLABORATION WITH & SUPPORT OF OTHER CHARITIES/GROUPS



TROCAIRE Earthquake in Morocco

Trocaire, partnering with Caritas Morocco, through our donation of €10,000 provided generators, clothes, first aid kits, food, medicine, and tents to people affected in AMZMIZ and its surroundings.

“On behalf of all of us here at TROCAIRE I would like to offer a heartfelt thank you for your generous donation of €10,000. This will go towards our response to the devastating earthquake in Morocco”.



MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES

The Congregational leadership team made a donation of €10,000 towards the work of Médecins Sans Frontières on the ground in Gaza at the beginning of the War. As the situation became more dire and the risks more acute for the people and their staff and partners in continuing to respond to the unfolding crisis the Trustees of the Sisters of Mercy made this donation.



ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING



MECPATHS

CHILD TRAFFICKING
KNOW IT | SEE IT | SAY IT

2023: A Snapshot

A positive year of connection, collaboration, evaluation and networking. MECPATHS has extended its reach over the past 12 months, uniquely positioned as the only Anti Child Trafficking Project in Ireland.

HOSPITALITY

In 2023, MECPATHS continued to work with Hospitality Training Colleges and Hotels across Ireland to support Management & Staff to recognise and report any suspicions of Child Trafficking. In 2023, MECPATHS Education resources were provided to over 4,500 members of The Hospitality Industry.



SOCIAL WORKERS

MECPATHS Supported Tusla, Ireland's Child & Family Agency, by delivering education workshops to front-line staff around Ireland and leading on the Development of National Policy, Strategy and Training Initiatives.



SECURITY

Partnership with The Private Security Authority launches Ireland's first Statutory Mandated Training on Human Trafficking with target reach of 43,000 security personnel 2023-2026



MEDICAL STAFF

80% of all victims will engage with a medical practitioner at some stage during their exploitation. In 2023, MECPATHS initiated workshops with The Mercy University Hospital Cork, GP's and Medical Social Workers across Ireland.



UNIVERSITIES

Teaching on all of the Social Work Masters Programmes in Ireland alongside Human Rights Law, Social Policy and Family Law courses was undertaken.



PARTNERSHIP

MECPATHS continues to be driven by partnership and collaboration. MECPATHS Network includes 42 member organisations at present.



Our Key Achievements in 2023

3869

Frontline Professionals
Educated

695

Emerging Professionals
Educated

1.1m

Media Reach

194

Partnership Meetings

ECO JUSTICE AND LOBBYING



As a registered lobbyist we made submissions in 2023 related to climate action which focusses on the achievement of our climate targets and reduce the country's energy demand. Data Centres are on the increase and the recent growth in electricity consumption is frightening.

As part of our concerns we requested that our MEPs vote in favour of a strong EU directive that can cut emissions and combat worsening energy poverty. We highlighted the need for a range of incentives for the roll out of renewable energy solutions.



We are also concerned for immigrants who find it difficult to remain in Ireland and we requested that one woman who was in direct provision for eight years in the west of Ireland be considered for a waiver of fees. She was studying Science in NUIG but found it difficult to get the €15,000 per annum fees to complete her course.

MERCY INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION



In 2023 the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy continued to develop the MGP (Mercy Global Presence) process begun in 2019. With two congregation representatives representing the Congregation on the MGA network we were able to extend our outreach in advocating for justice and to grow into the possibilities that this global collaboration offers.

The MGA Network Survey of 2023 indicates a great appreciation for the “usefulness and quality of information” shared by MGA.

“Clearly resources that are shared are valuable and appreciated not to mention the inputs from members which serve to educate the different ways Mercy engages with advocacy efforts; it also tends to push those of us “learners” to do better...”
(Network member in Ireland)

Water Justice: Early in the year 2023 a Water Justice Task Force was formed with Sr. Magdalen Musau’s (Kenyan Province) participation. The focal point of this Task Force was the UN Water conference in March while more broadly raising awareness throughout the Mercy World on the scarcity of water. We communicated the outcome of the conference via our website and congregational newsletter, Mercy Alive.

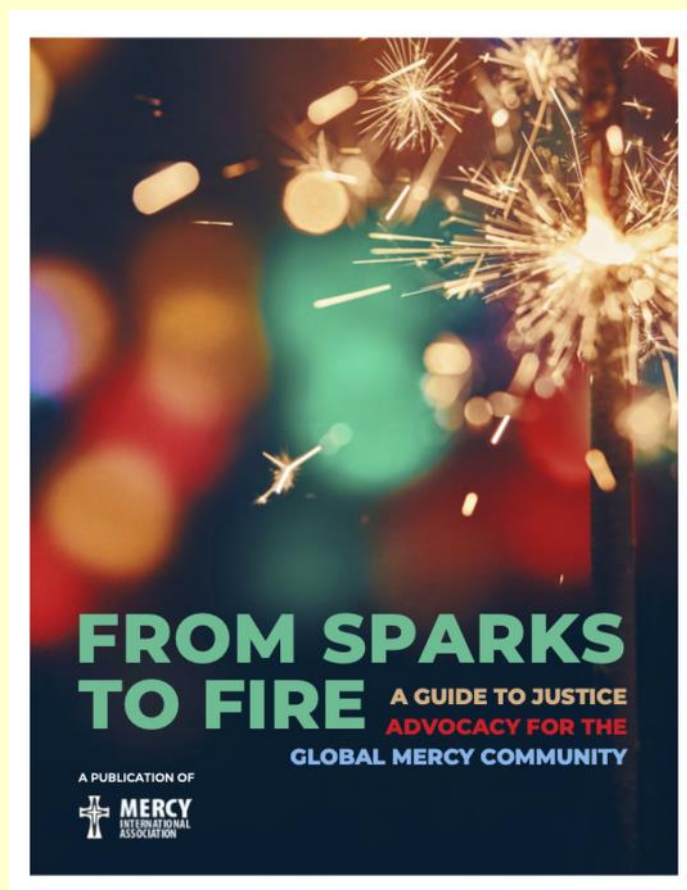
Women’s Empowerment: In March 2023 an online event focusing on Women’s Empowerment attracted over 100 participants including a staff member from Mukuru Promotion Centre (Kenya) who advocated for improved access to education for girls.

Resources made available to membership this year included a slide presentation on Water as well as an Advocacy template to coincide with the COP 28 event. The template was offered as a working resource for advocacy with political leaders, at local, national and international levels.

From Sparks To Fire: This Guide to Justice, a publication of Mercy International Association, was circulated to the global Mercy family.

“I celebrate that this publication is a contribution that the Mercy World makes to the often hidden impact of advocacy work... we can continue to celebrate our contribution to making our world a better place for Earth and people”
(Angela Reed RSM, Head of Mercy Global Action)

In our advocacy work for justice we circulated in our congregation a Slide presentation of the Key elements outlined in ***From Sparks to Fire.***



POSITIVE IMPACT INVESTING

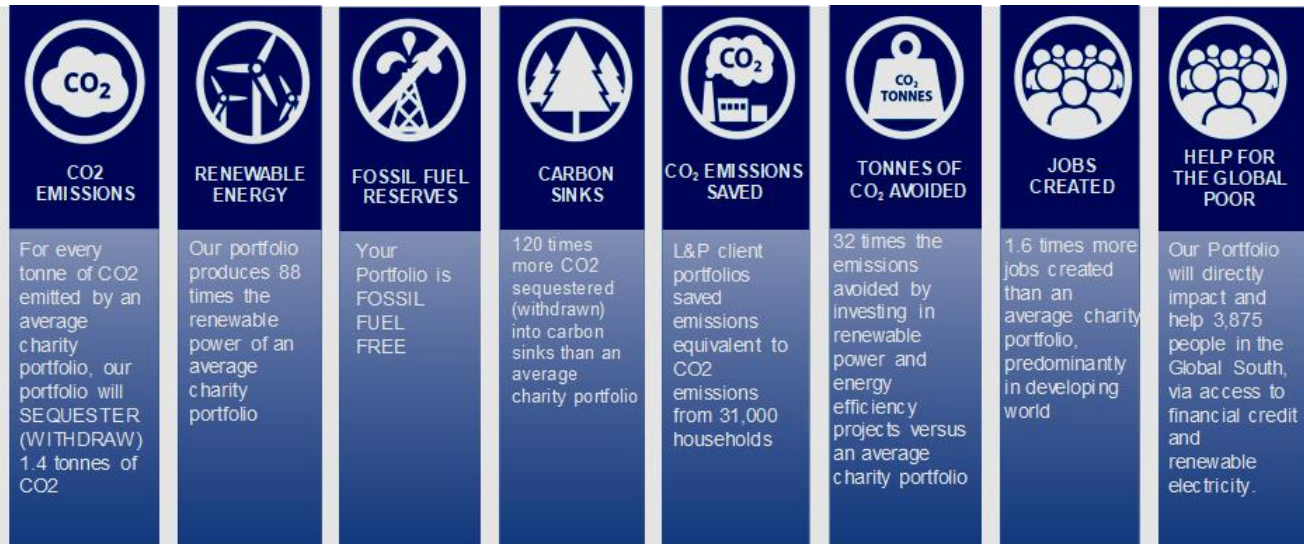
Summary View



POSITIVE IMPACT INVESTING

We view our investment portfolio as part of our Mission. We seek to bring about change and public benefit through **positive impact investing** in our investment portfolios together with our many other ministry activities.

The chart below gives an outline of the positive impacts achieved by our investments:



The Portfolio and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

All the investments within the Portfolio contribute towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Source: UN (<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>)

POSITIVE IMPACT INVESTING

The SDGs are closely aligned with the charitable objectives of our Mercy Congregation to ensure alignment of the SDGs we use a comprehensive Ethical and Positive Impact screen which guarantees the Portfolio remains consistent with the ethos of the charity.

Environmental Impact

Overall Carbon Footprint



Measurement of carbon emissions is crucial to help us understand the role our investment portfolio plays in the climate crisis, while taking measures to address it. As the SDG logos to the left show, limiting carbon emissions interacts with several SDGs, helping address **Climate Action** in particular. **Climate justice** is another aspect addressed in our portfolio, as climate change predominantly impacts those who have done the least to contribute to pollution and have less resources to deal with it. Therefore, control of carbon emissions in our portfolio also contributes to reducing poverty (SDG1), reducing inequality (SDG10), and preserving life on land (SDG15) and in the ocean (SDG14).

The presence of forestry, a highly effective carbon sink, in our portfolio means that any carbon emissions from the majority of the portfolio are effectively offset entirely by the forestry investments. The Portfolio in aggregate will **sequester** (withdraw) **-3,169 tonnes of CO₂** from the atmosphere per annum while an **unscreened portfolio of the same size would produce c. 2,673 tonnes of CO₂**.

Fossil Fuel Reserves

Following the Trustees decision to entirely divest from fossil fuels in early 2017, the Portfolio now holds no fossil fuel reserves.

POSITIVE IMPACT INVESTING

The chart below shows the fossil fuel reserves held by investments within the Portfolio across the major fossil fuels in comparison to an unscreened portfolio. As the chart shows, the Portfolio holds no fossil fuel reserves at all.

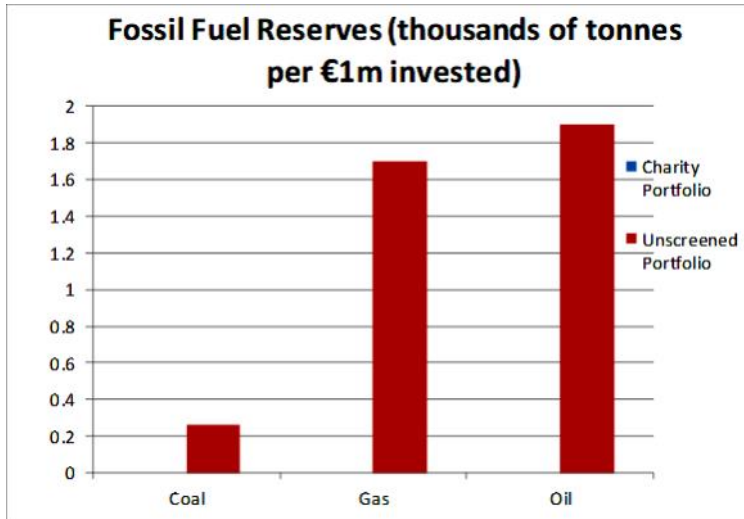


Chart showing the Charity's Investment Portfolio holds no fossil fuel reserves (no blue bar)

Renewable Energy

In our Portfolio, renewable power is produced by a number of investments based in Ireland, Europe, the US, and the developing world. We note some of the key impact metrics of these funds below:

Renewable Energy Fund

Renewable energy fund holding both onshore and offshore projects

- Energy for 300,000 houses per annum
- Avoids emissions of 400,000 tonnes of CO₂ per annum
- 1,000,000 MWh of renewable power per annum



POSITIVE IMPACT INVESTING

In terms of renewable energy produced, the Portfolio produced 7,997 MWh in 2023, enough energy to power approximately 371 homes.

Social Impact

Homelessness Crisis

The portfolio now includes the New Haven Social Housing Fund which addresses this chronic shortage of housing for vulnerable groups in Ireland. The goals of the fund are shown below:

Social Housing Fund

Innovative fund acquires properties for social housing purposes

- Provide €100m+ in long term capital to housing sector
- Target high ESG and sustainability standards
- 500+ new homes to be provided for social housing needs



HERITAGE INCLUDING ARCHIVES AND ASSETS

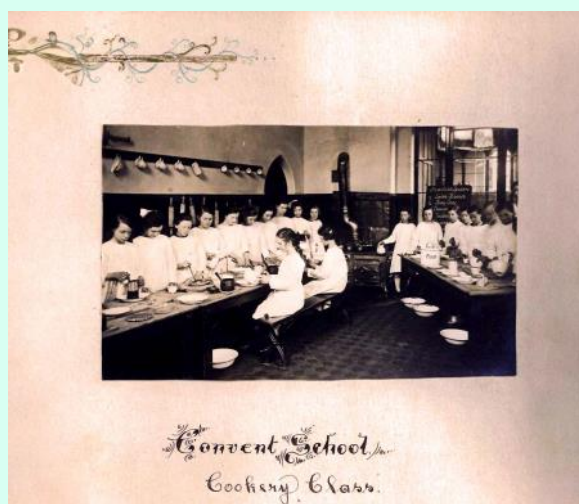
Summary View



MERCY CONGREGATIONAL ARCHIVES DUBLIN (MCA)

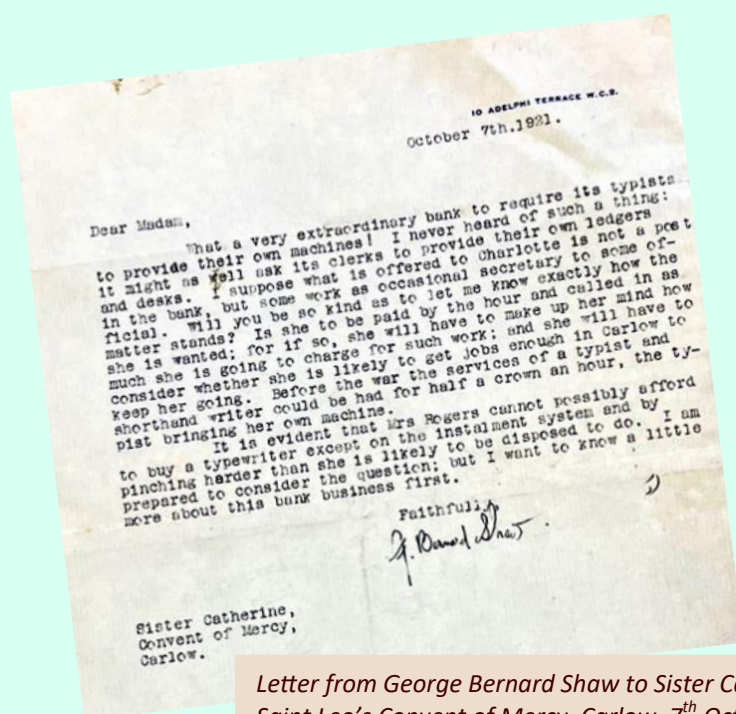
Mercy Archives Service comprises Mercy Congregational Archives and six provincial archives, four in Ireland, one each in the Kenya and South Africa provinces and a regional archive in the USA. In 2023, the staff in Mercy Congregational Archives comprised a full time archivist, a volunteer Sister of Mercy, a part-time office assistant, and an assistant archivist appointed in August 2022 on a two year contract. Mercy Congregational Archives works in liaison with provincial and regional archivists.

The role of Mercy Archives is to identify, acquire, organise, preserve and make available Congregational records of permanent historical value. In our Congregation we value the importance of religious archives for faith communities and for the whole of society. Our extensive archival material exists for service that includes: the service of history; of education religious faith; research; cultural development; collaboration with other institutes and the State.



Mercy Congregational Archives manages facilities for the retention, preservation and research use of such records. It also serves as a research facility for the study of the Congregation's history and its role in Irish society.

The Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy, in consultation with AMRI, is currently engaging with other Congregations toward the possibility of establishing a Shared Archive.



Letter from George Bernard Shaw to Sister Catherine, Saint Leo's Convent of Mercy, Carlow, 7th October 1921.

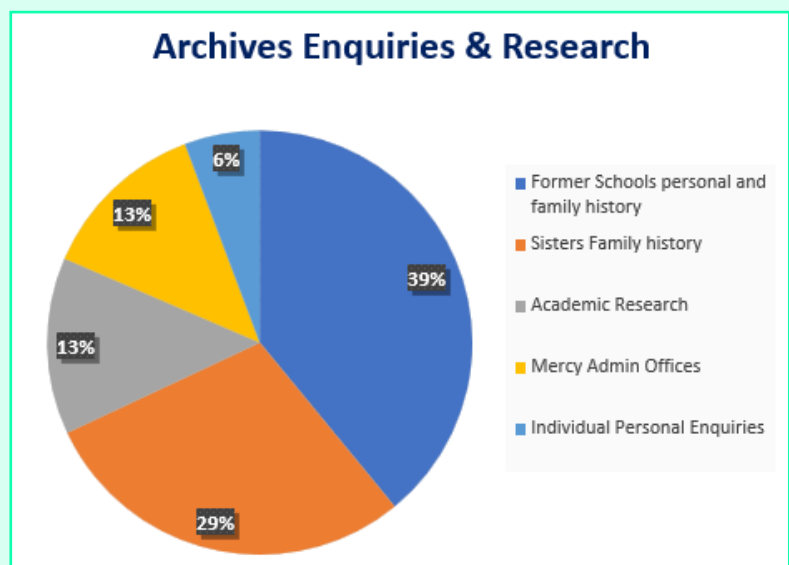
MERCY CONGREGATIONAL ARCHIVES DUBLIN

“There is real “Cultural Urgency” for the entire Catholic Church to preserve its Audiovisual, Documentary and other Media Archives and Assets...” *Pope Francis 2023.*

ENQUIRIES AND RESEARCHERS

The Archive responds to enquiries by researchers from a variety of fields including academics, family historians, local historians and historians of women religious. It also provides reference services to assist in the Congregation’s administration and operations.

297 research requests were received in 2023, the majority of which were remote access enquiries. Areas of enquiry included requests for **personal data, family history, convent history, Mercy ministry, and educational history**. **116** of the requests were for **personal and family history** data from **industrial schools**. **86** were **family history** requests relating to **individual Sisters of Mercy**. **40** requests related to **academic research, local history** and aspects of **Mercy history**. **38** requests came from **Mercy administrative offices** and **17** from **personal enquiries**.

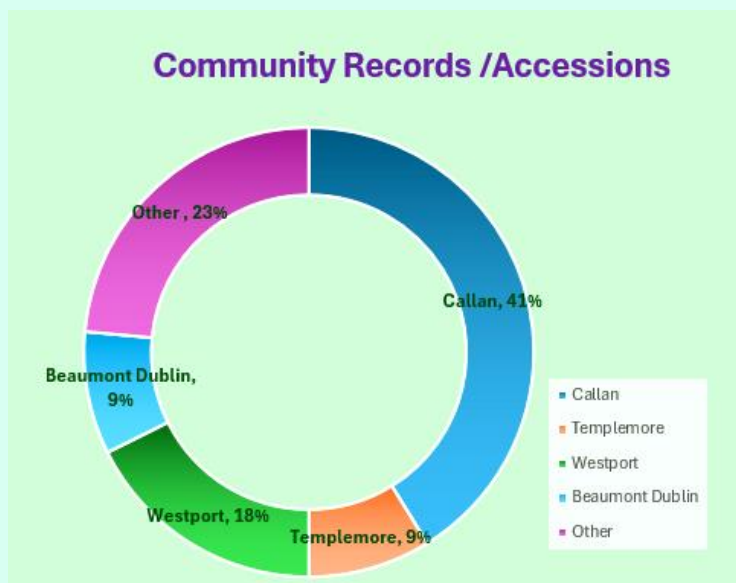


In addition, there were **21 research visits to the Archive**. Areas of interest to visiting researchers included the **migration of Irish Sisters of Mercy in the USA** for an academic paper; **architectural history of convents – Architects**; PhD Student studying **diet in institutional settings**, the **significance of music in the life of 19th century Irish women** – PhD Student studying in Oxford who will both present an academic paper and include singing some of the music she has researched; **industrial schools**; and **Carysfort teacher training college**.

MERCY CONGREGATIONAL ARCHIVES DUBLIN

ACCESSIONS

37 accessions were received during 2023 including records from communities and personal papers. Amongst the larger accessions were records from convents in Callan, Templemore, Westport, and Beaumont, Dublin.



OUTREACH/MEETINGS/EVENTS

Mercy Archives collaborated with University College Dublin for the **launch of Carysfort College and its Networks: the registers and the people 1833-1922**. **Three registers** containing **biographical, educational and professional** records of **4067 teacher training students** have been digitised and indexed and are available to access on the **UCD digital library and the Digital Repository of Ireland**. The registers are a valuable resource for historians and genealogists and provide a unique insight into the history of women, education and employment for the years 1883-1922. The project illustrates how inter-agency collaboration can render records more accessible to a wider audience and offer a new perspective for the study of Irish social educational history.

Staff contributed to the congregational newsletter and attended meetings and webinars.

Mercy Archives is working with local Mercy communities to compile a **pictorial record** of **Mercy cemeteries** including, where possible, photographs of individual graves and headstones.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

RESULTS FOR THE YEAR

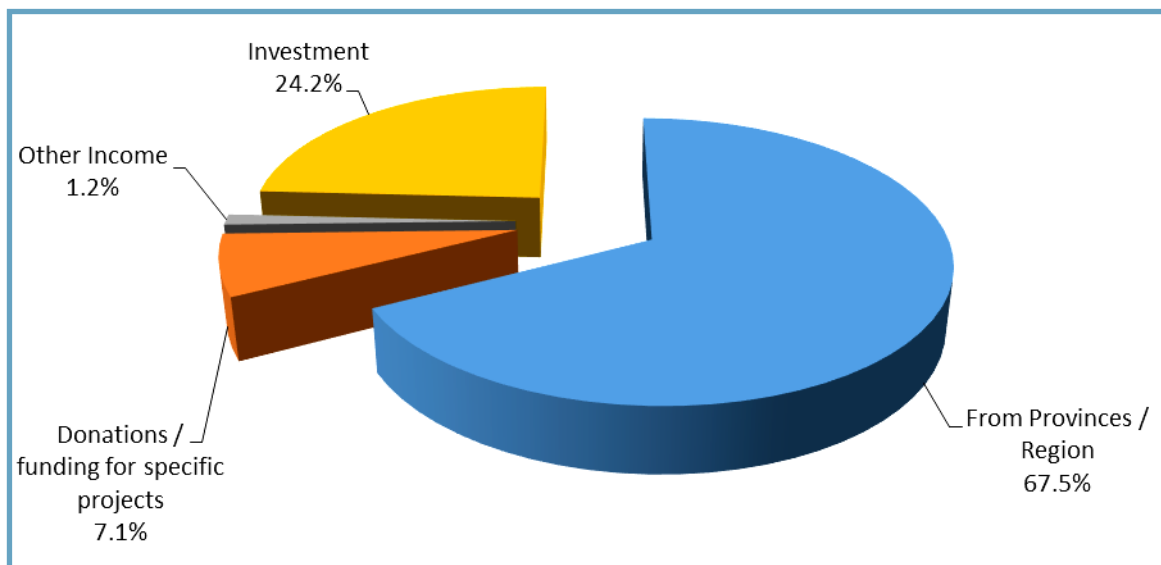
A summary of the year's accounts can be found on page 47 of this Report.

Income - Where our Income Came From

Income for the year totalled €1,375,138:

- ◆ Donations & Legacies income of €1,025,625: was €927,842 in levies and distributions received from the Provinces and Region of the Congregation and €97,783 in restricted donations and restricted funding received for specific projects.
- ◆ Investment Income of €332,551: was the income earned on the Charity's investment portfolio and rental income received.
- ◆ Other Income of €16,962: includes the Charity's refund under the VAT Compensation Scheme and other miscellaneous income received during the year.

Breakdown of Income



Expenditure - Where the Money is Spent

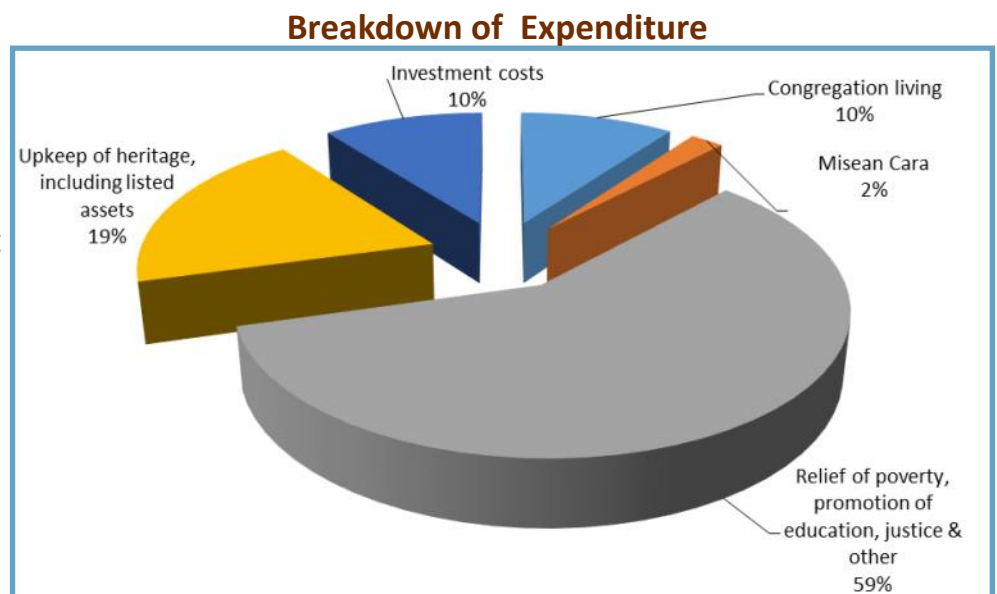
Total Expenditure for the Year was €1,748,595.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Charitable Activities - of the total, €1,567,425 or 90%, was spent on Charitable Activities:

- ◆ Relief of poverty, promotion of education, justice and other charitable activities, €1,023,056: this includes expenditure on a number of headings outlined earlier in the report, including Mission Development, MECPATHS and Eco Justice and Lobbying.
- ◆ Upkeep of heritage, including listed assets, €332,746: this includes expenditure on Congregational Archives as referred to earlier in the report. In addition, the Charity owns a protected structure which is listed on the planning authority's Record of Protected Structures (RPS). By including them in the RPS, the importance of this structure is recognised; it is 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 this structure does not become endangered through neglect, decay, damage or harm.
- ◆ Congregational living, the advancement of Religion, €173,558: this includes expenditure on a number of headings outlined earlier in the report such as Promotion of the Cause of Catherine McAuley and Formation. It also includes a depreciation charge of approximately €30,000 as well as the upkeep of the members of the Congregation Leadership Team. The members who receive earned income (salary, pension, stipend, retirement lump sums) donate them to the Congregation and therefore have no independent means of support. Hence the work of the Charity includes the provision of living accommodation and up-skilling/retraining of the members of the Congregation Leadership Team.
- ◆ Miseen Cara related expenditure totalled €38,065.

Investment Costs – in the year, investment costs totalled €181,170.





FINANCIAL REVIEW

Net Movement in Funds

Net expenditure for the year, therefore, was €373,457. This was before the gain on investment assets, which when taken into account results in a net increase in funds in the year of €34,590.

Investments

At 31st December 2023, the Charity had investments of €31.9m. 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 advisors, 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 €35.4m. Of this, €2.8m. is represented by properties and other tangible fixed assets essential for the running of the Charity. The Trustees have designated another €29.9m. to provide for Mission and Ministry works and Congregational Living needs. Details are given in note 17 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 €2.7m. This equates to approximately 20 months of unrestricted charitable expenditure. The Trustees consider this reasonable, given the nature of the Charity's work and its commitments.

PLANS FOR FUTURE 2024

The Congregational Leader and Team will continue to give attention 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. At the same time the Charity plans to support the various works of the Congregation.



OBJECTIVES

- The Trustees will strategically plan for the 2024 Canonical Chapter which is the chief decision making body in the Congregation and sets out directions for the following six years.
- Engage with the Mission and Strategic Direction of the Charity/Congregation guided by the Directives from the EGC (Extraordinary General Chapter) 2022 and the Congregational Chapter Statement of April 2024.
- Prepare for the smooth transition to the newly elected Congregational Leader and Team.
- The Trustees will continue to collaborate with Mercy International Association and Mercy worldwide in placing Mercy Global Presence at the heart of its vision which was embraced in 2019.
- The Trustees will continue to explore and encourage new members in vowed religious life and provide ongoing Formation Courses. They will also continue to network in passing on the charism to lay colleagues.



PLANS FOR FUTURE 2024

- Continue to manage facilities and staffing for the Archival retention, preservation and research.
- Continue to identify, appraise, collect, organise and preserve congregational records of permanent historical value and make them available as appropriate.
- Organise meetings with provinces and region to give clearer focus to mission and ministry.
- Attend gatherings in Kenya and South Africa.
- Produce and present the Congregational Report accounting for their governance over the past six years 2018 to 2024.
- Organise a Congregational stewardship day for the delegates who will attend the Congregational Chapter in 2024.
- Review and update all policies and procedures where necessary.
- Mission and Development officer to continue her work with the provinces overseas.
- Restructuring/CAS
- In the furtherance of the Mercy mission the Trustees will continue to support MECPATHS and ECO JUSTICE as they continue their outreach in accordance with new needs and developments.
- Continue to support local and worldwide charities in time of need, in particular victims of war, famine and natural disasters.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

Nature of Governing Document

The governing instrument of the Congregation 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 governmental structure of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy involves a number of **inter-connected** units, **local, regional, provincial** and **congregational**. The nature of the authority in each unit is described in the Constitutions.

Organisational Structure and Decision Making

The Congregational Leader and members of the Congregational Leadership Team are the Trustees of the Charity. With regard to decision-making the Trustees take responsibility for the overall running of the Charity. Trustees attend formal training courses on the duties of Trustees. They are ultimately responsible for the **life, mission, ministry activities** and **assets** of the Congregation. They meet on a regular basis for strategic planning, organisational development, capacity building, review, updating and decision making.

The Trustees have established a number of resource and advisory groups from among members of the Congregation as well as various professional advisors. The function of these groups is to advise the Trustees on different aspects of Stewardship and the general management of the assets of the Provinces and the Congregation.

There are **systems of accountability** operational throughout the Congregation. The Congregational Treasurer is appointed by the Congregational Leader with the consent of her team. The **Congregational Treasurer** administers the affairs of the Congregation under the direction of the Congregational leader and her team. **Investments** provide the main source of income for the Congregation.

Trustees meet on a **regular basis** to **review the Charity's Assets and Activities**. When necessary they seek advice from the Charity's Advisors. The Congregation is divided into six Provinces and one Region. Each Province is governed by a Provincial Leadership team elected by the members of the Province and the Regional Leadership team elected by members of the Region.



STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

The Trustees visit all areas of the Congregation at least once and more often if required during their term of leadership. The Trustees hold a **Plenary Conference**, when necessary, which is attended by the leadership teams of the entire Congregation. All aspects of the life and mission of the Congregation as well as plans for future mission are discussed and considered during these meetings. The Trustees are in regular contact with the Provincial and Regional Leaders. For effective management, each of the Trustees is designated as a link person to the Provinces and Region. The link person connects with the Provincial and Regional leadership on a regular basis and is constantly updated on the life, mission and ministry activities of the Province and Region.



Congregational | Provincial | Regional Leadership Teams

CONGREGATIONAL POLICIES INCLUDING SAFEGUARDING

The Congregational Leadership Team has the responsibility to ensure that all Congregational **policies and good practice guidelines** are developed, circulated, known and implemented across all areas of the Congregation.

Throughout 2023 the Congregational Leadership Team continued to review, promulgate and update the content and values underpinning all Congregational policies. During various visits with Provincial and Regional Leadership Teams the importance of good practice - both in and outside community settings - was continually underscored.

Particular emphasis was focused upon the Conflict of Interest Policy and its pivotal place within the decision making processes of our various activities. Many conversations between leadership and safeguarding personnel centred on how vulnerable persons would best be protected from harm and /or neglect.

Training in the area of cyber security was particularly promoted and the secure protection of property and material goods was also a focus of attention.

Ongoing exposure and training regarding child safeguarding, the requirements of the CRA as well as civil and canonical law was a feature of the leadership role.



The Staff handbook was updated and all staff attended training including a wide range of policies relating to their employment and the Congregation.



RISK ASSESSMENT AND 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 Stewardship 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

Considers the efficiency of the Trustee body. Risks considered include a lack of planning, a Trustee body which lacks sufficient skills or appropriate decision making procedures. Such risks could include a lack of training/induction or poor stewardship of resources—human, financial and property.

Steps Taken to Mitigate Risk:

- ◇ Adherence to Chapter Statement which inspires and directs the Strategic Plan.
- ◇ By addressing both Annual and Long Term Plans, holding regular Trustee Meetings which include the monitoring of actual performance against these plans.
- ◇ Financial Plans are prepared each year. These are reviewed and agreed by the Trustees.
- ◇ 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

Considers the financial capacity of the Charity and ensuring it has the available financial resources to continue to carry out its activities both now and in the years ahead. This incorporates the management of the operating (day-to-day) position, capital or building requirements and the returns earned on the Charity's investment portfolios.

Steps Taken to Mitigate Risk:

- ◇ The appointment of an investment advisor who meets with the Trustees/Stewardship Group on a regular basis.
- ◇ The investment objectives are agreed and reviewed quarterly to consider prudence and liquidity criteria, regular and financial reporting against budget and cash flow planning.
- ◇ Investment reports are received and reviewed by the Trustees/Stewardship Group at the end of each quarter.
- ◇ Annual budgets are prepared for review and approval by Trustees. Budgets are reviewed on a quarterly basis and variances noted/explained at Stewardship Group Meetings.



RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

OPERATION

Considers the way in which the Charity reduces the risk of becoming a victim of a cyber attack or a data breach. The risks considered include malicious cyber activity which may result in loss or corruption of data, preventing unauthorised access to information, including personal information.

Steps Taken to Mitigate Risk:

- ◇ IT Consultant contracted who works with the Office Manager to ensure that computers have the latest software.
- ◇ Passwords are used for emailing sensitive and financial data.
- ◇ In-house staff training which incorporated updated Cyber Security Guidelines.
- ◇ External Cyber Security training planned for 2023.

METHOD ADOPTED FOR APPOINTMENT & INDUCTION OF NEW LEADERSHIP/TRUSTEES

Every six years, elected members of the Congregation meet at a Congregational Chapter (meeting) with the following objectives;

- ◆ To foster the Mercy charism in accordance with the objectives of the charity
- ◆ To give creative direction to the life and mission of the Congregation
- ◆ To elect a Congregational Leader and Team
- ◆ To reassess the Congregational resources

At our Chapter Meeting in July 2018 the present Congregational Team was elected. An Extraordinary General Chapter was held in June 2022 to plan for the future of the Congregation. The Congregational Leader and the Congregational Leadership Team are chosen for their personal qualities, their understanding and experience of the ministries of the Congregation.



The Congregational Leader exercises authority throughout the Congregation, in consultation with the Leadership Team. By virtue of the office they are the Trustees of the Charity. There is a period of induction when new Trustees are appointed - the outgoing Trustees handover all relevant information to the incoming Trustees over the space of a number of months. In addition the newly appointed Trustees undertake trustee training within the first year of taking on their roles. They are also given a full briefing of their responsibilities by the professional advisors to the Congregation.

It is the policy of the Congregational Leadership Team to work in collaboration with the six Provinces and Region, their lay colleagues, statutory and voluntary bodies, other religious congregations and organisations.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS



TRUSTEES (Congregational Leadership Team)

Sr. Bernie Ryan, Sr. Helena O'Donoghue, Sr. Marie Louise White, Sr. Anna Burke, Sr. Cáit O'Dwyer. (left to right)

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|----------------------------------|---|
| Charity Registered Number | 20023843 |
| CHY Number | 9527 |
| Principal Office | 13/14 Moyle Park Convent Road Clondalkin Dublin 22 D22 HR 94 |

Accounting Records

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibilities under the Statement of Recorded Practice "Accounting by Charities" (SORP) and their obligations to keep proper books and records for the charity. The books of account of the charity are kept at 13/14 Moyle Park, Convent Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22.

Disclosure of information to Auditor

Each of the persons who are Trustees at the time when this Trustees' report is approved has confirmed that: so far as that Trustee is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditor is unaware, and that Trustee has taken all the steps that ought to have been taken as a Trustee in order to be aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditor is aware of that information.

Independent Auditor

The independent auditor, RBK Business Advisers, has indicated their willingness to continue in office.



REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Stewardship Group

Sr. Marie Louise White, Congregational Leader
Sr. Bernie Ryan, Leadership Team Member
Ms. Karen Finan, Financial Administrator
Sr. Anne Doyle, Congregational Treasurer
L&P Trustees Services.

Independent Auditor

*RBK Business Advisers, Chartered Accountants
and Statutory Audit Firm*
Chartered Accountants & Registered Auditor
Boole House, Beech Hill Office Campus, Beech Hill Road,
Clonskeagh, Dublin 4, D04 A563.

Bankers

Allied Irish Banks plc
Stephen Court
18-21 St Stephen's Green
Dublin 2

Bank of Ireland
28 Main Street
Blackrock
Co Dublin

Solicitors

Mason Hayes & Curran
South Bank House
Barrow Street
Dublin 4

Financial Advisors Investment Advisors

L & P Trustee Services
Cantor Fitzgerald Ireland
75 St. Stephen's Green
Dublin 2
D02 PR50

Investment Managers

Unigestion SA
State Street Global Advisors Ltd
Setanta Asset Management Ltd

