

Sisters of Mercy

Features of the Foundation of the Sisters of Mercy Global Presence



*The Mercy Cross symbolizes identification
with Christ Crucified.
Mercy is identified with the
Paschal Mystery, the dying and rising of Jesus.*

Name _____



The Founding Vision

Sisters of Mercy all around the world draw inspiration from Catherine McAuley, who founded the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland in 1831.

Catherine's words - *"It began with 2, Sister Doyle and I"* - speak of the humble beginning to what has now become an international association of Sisters of Mercy.

Catherine recognised the needs of those who were marginalised and oppressed by unjust social attitudes and practices of the day. She responded by establishing a House of Mercy in Dublin which provided educational, religious and social services for women and children who were at risk of homelessness through exploitation and entrenched poverty.

Within the first ten years, Catherine's sisters had heard the missionary call inherent in the vocation of a Sister of Mercy and crossed the oceans bringing mercy to Newfoundland, England, United States of America, Scotland, Australia and New Zealand.

Watch the Circle of Mercy reflection

<http://www.mercyworld.org/spirituality/view-reflection.cfm?uuid=3E3EEA85-2219-A8B0-B611C7A89D62B804>

The song 'Circle of Mercy' by Jeannette Goglia rsm (Americas) is the inspiration for this reflection which features moments of Mercy Ministry in the day to day lives of people with whom we share Mercy in the more than 40 countries where Sisters of Mercy and our co-workers live and minister.



1. In the space below make a list of the ministries that the Sisters of Mercy currently work in.

2. The Sisters of Mercy, like Catherine, respond to the current needs of society. Explain the shift in services offered by the Sisters of Mercy from 1831 to 2014.

Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISMAPNG)

The story of the Sisters of Mercy in Australia and Papua New Guinea begins in Ireland on December 12, 1831 when Catherine McAuley, along with two companions, Anna Maria Doyle and Elizabeth Harley, professed their vows and became the first Sisters of Mercy.

Arrival in Australia and Papua New Guinea

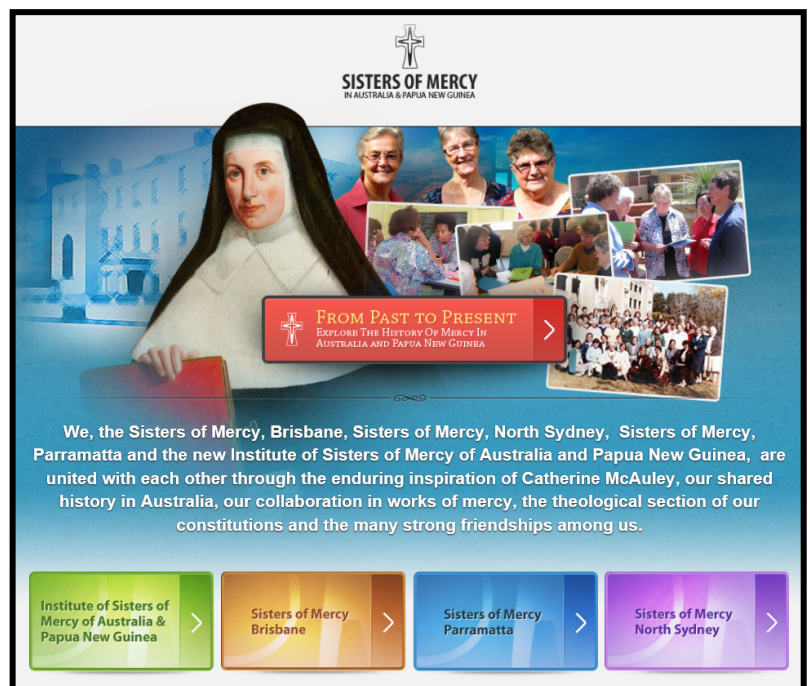
In 1846, just five years after Catherine's death, Sisters of Mercy made a foundation in Perth, Western Australia. The leader of this first Mercy community in Australia was Ursula Frayne who had known Catherine well and, in fact, was with her when she died. The first Sisters of Mercy who arrived in Papua New Guinea came to Goroka from Australia in 1956.

Search for Unity

Even as early as 1905, the Australian Bishops urged congregations of common origin to unite so that their capacity for the vital work of Catholic education, as well for as other ministries would be strengthened. Although since the beginning there had been a number of movements towards unity for the various Mercy congregations in Australia, a most significant step in this direction happened with the creation of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia (ISMA) on December 12, 1981. For thirty years, ISMA, which encompassed the 17 independent Australian Congregations of Sisters of Mercy and the Autonomous Region of Sisters of Mercy in Papua New Guinea (PNG), engaged fruitfully in God's mission. From 2005 the Sisters commenced formally searching for the best way to nurture our unity and to strengthen our capacity for engaging in God's mission of mercy.

Reconfiguring Mercy

The search involved much prayer, frequent theological reflection on the social needs of our time, careful study of the life and ministry of our founder, Catherine McAuley and her vision for religious life, and several comprehensive consultations in which all sisters were encouraged to participate. Eventually it led us to the point where 14 of the congregations as well as the autonomous region of PNG, decided to ask the Holy See for permission to relinquish our independence and to come together as one new congregation. Rome granted this permission in July, 2011 to become effective at the commencement of the First Chapter of the new congregation on December 12, the 180th anniversary of the founding of the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland.



The new congregation is known as **Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISMAPNG)**.

The Sisters of Mercy first came to Australia in 1846 and to Papua New Guinea in 1956. Dedicated to serving people who suffer from injustices related to poverty, sickness or lack of education, we endeavour to respond to a range of local and global needs. For the sake of our mission, in December, 2011, fifteen Mercy congregations formed the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea.

MERCY impels us
Marimari I kirapim tingting bilong mipela
to extravagant **HOSPITALITY**,
long soim nambawan tru; pasin welkam
COMPASSION and **JUSTICE**
pasin bilong sori, na soim stretpela pasin
in the earth community,
long olgeta komuniti bilong graun
being shattered
wei I stap nabautnabaut
by displacement.
bikos I nogat ples bilong ol yet.



CHAPTER STATEMENT 2011

Institute of Sisters of Mercy of
Australia and Papua New Guinea

Available Online at <http://institute.mercy.org.au/mercyinaction/default.cfm?loadref=2>

Read over the Statement of the First Institute Chapter

From your understanding of the Sisters of Mercy define each of the following terms. Are you able to name a Mercy ministry that would under each category?

Mercy



Hospitality

Compassion



Justice



Our Statement of the First Institute Chapter calls us to Mercy in Action wherever we are.

Throughout rural and urban Australia, in Papua New Guinea and internationally, the Sisters of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISMAPNG) are advocating for people with no voice and for those seeking justice at home and beyond. This is done through:

- sharing our time, energy and resources so that people can have quality of life through the ministry of our various organisations, e.g. hospitals, aged care facilities, social services and pastoral care;
- continuing to minister in creative ways in education, health and aged care and welfare;
- enabling women and men to experience fullness of life through a range of pastoral and spiritual ministries, e.g. counselling, retreats and spiritual direction.

The Sisters of ISMAPNG are educators, theologians, scripture scholars, liturgists, writers and publishers, researchers, archivists, historians, musicians, artists, bioethicists, ecumenists, canon lawyers, lawyers and advocates for justice.

Some are working in interfaith relations, with media and communications technology, while others are environmentalists and ecologists. Some continue to administer institutions and others offer hospitality in a variety of ways.

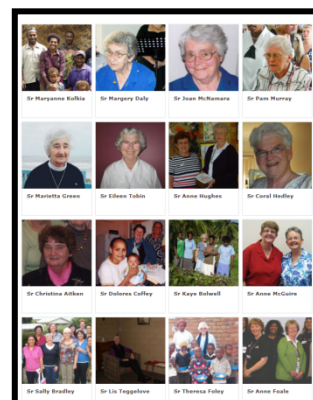


Where we no longer do the work ourselves, the mission of Mercy continues through the skill, energy and commitment of our ministry partners – men and women who are our dedicated co-workers, board members and volunteers.

Sisters of Mercy, through their vowed commitment, are compelled to respond to global issues and address issues of injustice with a profound belief in the dignity and equality of all people. Currently our world is challenged by the devastating reality that two-thirds of the world population lives in hunger, poverty, disadvantage and where our planet is threatened as never before with mass destruction of all its life-forms.

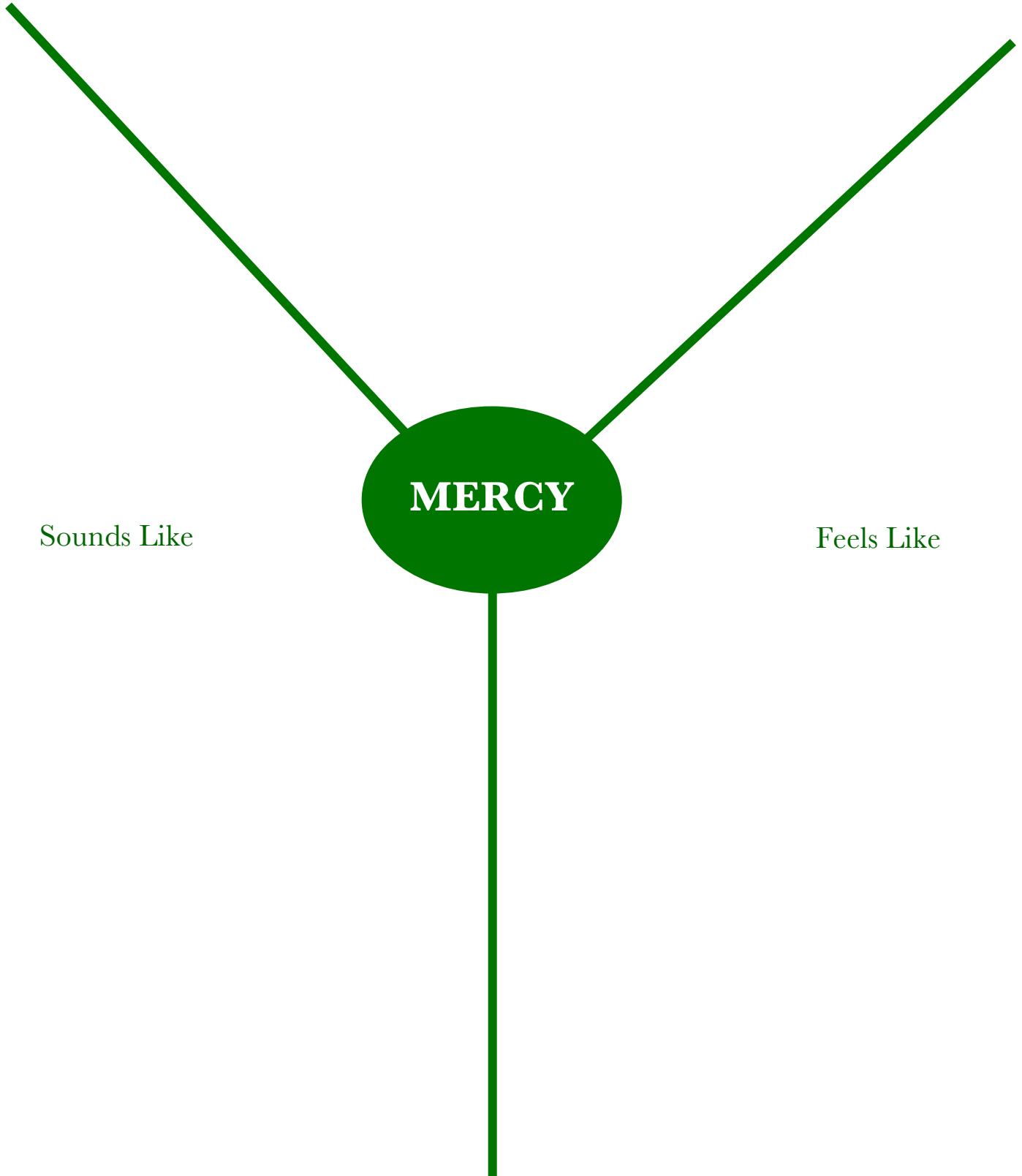
Choose one Sister of Mercy and read through her story

1. Read the profile of **one** of the **Sisters of Mercy** featured online at <http://institute.mercy.org.au/mercyinaction/default.cfm?loadref=278>
2. Using the 'Y Chart' over the page **explain Mercy** from this woman's perspective. This may require you to investigate further the particular ministry that the sister is directly involved in.



Name of the Sister of Mercy _____

Looks Like



Sounds Like

Feels Like

MERCY

Mercy In Action

Grounded in Gospel values and inspired by Catherine McAuley, we are compelled by God's spirit and our tradition to work, both individually and corporately, to bring about a more just and compassionate world.

Women & Poverty

As Sisters of Mercy we are disturbed by the fact that women bear a disproportionate burden of the world's poverty. Inspired by the example of Catherine McAuley, we have always expressed a special concern for women who find themselves in needy and vulnerable situations, by providing education, accommodation, health care and other social services.

We remain committed to supporting women who find themselves in needy and vulnerable situations.

Indigenous Concerns

Sisters of Mercy have a long history of working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in remote, regional and urban areas, at the coal face, in policy think tanks and in advocacy networks. In some parts of Australia we have been working in this way for over 70 years.

We believe that Indigenous Peoples have been disadvantaged hugely in Australian society. In the last 20 years, despite the best efforts of many, the socio-economic situation of Indigenous Peoples and their rights to self-determination, have improved very little.

We remain committed to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in their struggle for justice.

Asylum Seekers and Refugees

As Sisters of Mercy we are disturbed by the massive numbers of people in our world who are refugees, displaced and seeking asylum. It is our belief that all people have a right to survive and thrive.

We have a long tradition of working with asylum seekers and refugees, both overseas and in Australia. Mercy Works Ltd is part of the relief and development work of the Sisters of Mercy. It serves without discrimination the uprooted and displaced peoples of the world. More than giving material assistance Mercy Works accompanies refugees, listens to them, and enables them to have a voice.

Individual Sisters of Mercy also provide pastoral and practical support to asylum seekers in Australian detention centres and those living in the community.

We remain committed to supporting asylum seekers and refugees and advocating for policies which are compassionate and just.

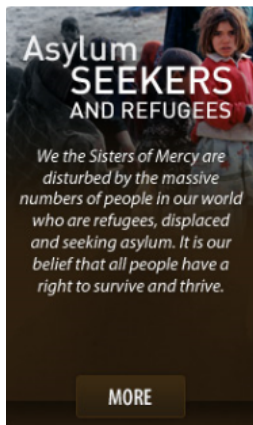
Eco-Justice

Sisters of Mercy believe that the earth was created and is held in existence by God, and that as stewards of creation, we have a responsibility to respect, reverence and care for the earth.

We mourn the ravaging of the earth and the consequent poverty and dispossession of people. An active ministry to the earth is integral to our Mercy spirituality.

We remain committed to working for eco-justice.

Complete an investigation into each of the areas of advocacy of the ISMAPNG available online at <http://institute.mercy.org.au/mercyinaction/singlecolumn.cfm?loadref=311>



Watch the story
“The Ache of Displacement”
and answer the following questions

Name the Advocate/s featured

In what country is the advocacy work carried out? _____

How or why did she become involved in this area of advocacy? _____

Explain the injustice/s that is being addressed _____

Provide some specific example of the type of work being carried out to address the injustices _____

Read through the following information



Please visit the
Asylum Seekers and
Refugees blog for more
information and to share
your thoughts



Watch the story
About women and poverty
and answer the following questions

Name the Advocate/s featured

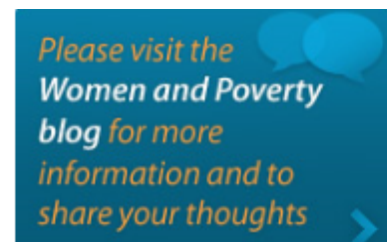
In what country is the advocacy work carried out? _____

Explain the injustice/s that is being addressed _____

Provide some specific example of the type of work being carried out to address the injustices _____

"Education is key to change and progress in life, its transforming" Explain this statement _____

Read through the following information





Watch the story
About Eco Justice
and answer the following
questions

Name the Advocate/s featured

In what country is the advocacy work carried out? _____

Explain the injustice/s that is being addressed _____

Provide some specific example of the type of work being carried out to address the injustices _____

"Climate Change; we sometimes refer to it in the Pacific, as the tipping edge. There are many, many other issues, and poverty is one of them that are compounded by climate change. But they are already dealing with issues that are making their lives and their nations quite unviable" Explain this statement _____

Read through the following information



Please visit the
Eco-Justice blog
for more information
and to share your
thoughts

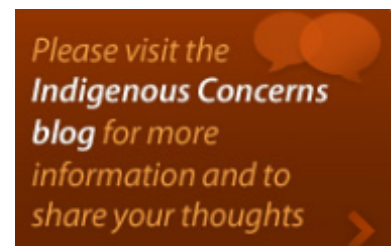


Watch the story
About Indigenous Concerns
and answer the following questions

Name the Advocate/s featured

In what country is the advocacy work carried out? _____

Read through the following information



"It seems today that everyone is arguing about the most important issue to tackle in our communities, whether it is alcohol, or housing problems, or health issues. The reality is that each of these things are interconnected and interrelated, and it is only with a broader long term vision that we can tackle the underlying social and political issues that fuel our disadvantage."

Read through the information under context as well as contained in the blog and comment on how the Sisters of Mercy are working towards tackling the issues mentioned above _____

Mercy International Association



**SISTERS OF
MERCY**
WORLDWIDE

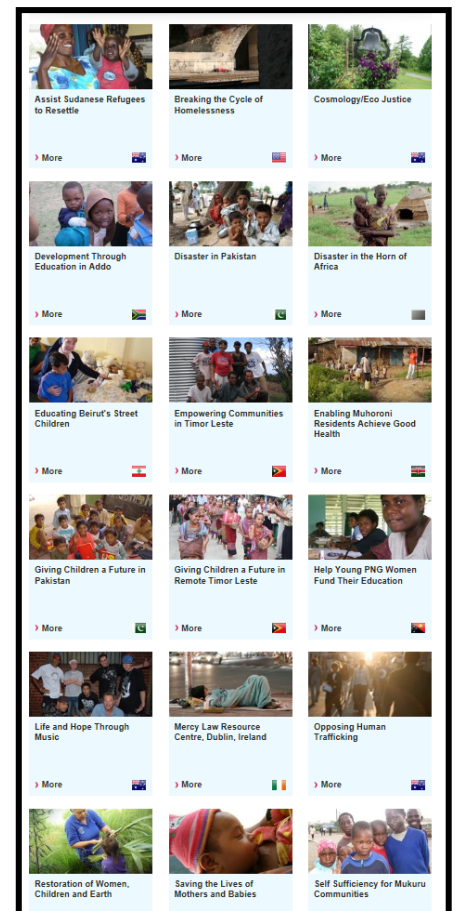
Today, Sisters of Mercy, through Mercy International Association, use their resources to respond to issues of **global poverty** demonstrated in the massive displacement of persons worldwide.

Global Action Programme

The main goal of MIA's global action is to develop a programme based on the grassroots stories of Mercy work throughout the world, which is firmly rooted in theological reflection for social action and which will develop policy and advocacy positions to influence change through the national and international decision making bodies, primarily the EU and the United Nations.

The Guiding principles underlying the work are as follows:

- MIA Global Action is based on the Mercy charism and **theological reflection for social action**. MIA's Global Action Programme is based on reflection, analysis and action (praxis) and has a theological underpinning.
- MIA is delivering a clear message in relation to its stand for women, children, people living in poverty and for eco justice. Mercy charism involves working with poor, marginalized people addressing the underlying causes of poverty. The focus of the work is on alleviating poverty, working for justice through systemic change and promoting ecological sustainability.
- MIA Global Action emphasises **compassion, respect and hospitality** in its relationships. MIA is adopting a people-centered approach bringing the human stories of their work into their social analysis and advocacy. MIA Global Action emphasises **interconnectedness and partnership** and brings all aspects of Mercy work together.
- MIA Global Action is supporting Mercy Congregations and Institutes to work together to strengthen their common work and to do things together which they cannot do alone. They are working in partnership rather than competition with other like minded organisations, religious and lay.



Explore some of the projects currently being carried out

available online at http://www.mercyworld.org/mercy_global_action/index.cfm?loadref=218

Choose one of the global project that you have read about, identify the social issue that is being addressed and explain how Catherine's legacy to recognise the needs of those who were marginalised and oppressed by unjust social attitudes and practices is being continued.

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 evenly spaced horizontal grey lines across its entire width, providing a guide for handwriting or typing. The paper itself is a clean, off-white color.

From humble beginnings, we can see the growth of the Sisters of Mercy and the partnerships that have been formed to ensure that the Mercy charism continues in contemporary society.

Outline one challenge that the Sisters of Mercy may face in carrying out their mission.

[illegible]

Reflections

Standing on their Shoulders

I am standing on the shoulders
of the ones who came before me.
I am stronger for their courage;
I am wiser for their words;
I am lifted by their longing for a fair and brighter future;
I am grateful for their vision, for their toiling on this earth.

("Standing on the Shoulders" by Joyce Johnson Rouise)

"While we place all our confidence in God,
we must act as if all depended on our exertion."

Catherine McAuley

In Praise Of Godly People

Now will I praise those godly people,
our ancestors
each in their life-time gave God glory through their deeds.
There were those who ventured out and established settlements;
others gave wise advice.
or talked about what might happen in the future.
There were princes and rulers;
Authors skilled in compositions and writers of clever sayings;
composers of psalms and passages of poetry.
Strong and dependable people, solidly established
and at home with their achievements.
All these were glorious in their time, each was illustrious in their day.
Some of them left behind a famous name and people
tell the story of their deeds.
But of others there is no such memorial.

Yet these also were good people whose virtues have not been forgotten.
Their wealth remains in their families, their heritage with their descendants.
Through God's covenant with them their family endures
the generations follow for their sake.
And for all time their descendants will endure
their glory will never be blotted out.
Their bodies are peacefully laid away but their
name lives on and on.
At family gatherings their wisdom is retold
and all those present proclaim their praise.

SIRACH 44:1-9, 10-15 (adapted)