

**CARLOW ROUNDTABLE PROCEEDINGS**





# CARLOW ROUNDTABLE 2015 PROCEEDINGS



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# Mercy: The Story Continues



## THE SIXTH CARLOW ROUNDTABLE

First time visitors to Ireland often speak of Irish history as something wholly experienced as they travel and explore the landscape and culture of Ireland.

Indeed, Irish history is beautifully woven among facts, myths, legends, and a bit of enchantment that ties it all together. In May of 2015 as Mercy colleagues and scholars gathered together for the Sixth Roundtable in Catherine's House, magician Kevin Spencer, artist Kyle Holbrook, and Roundtable colleague Susan O'Rourke opened the conference by introducing their groundbreaking work of using a world of magic and Illusion, and creative art, to help the most vulnerable students in schools. Through their passionate work, the common thread of the mission and work of Mercy in higher education was revealed.

The story of the Sisters of Mercy is woven into the rich culture and History of Ireland. Along our journey, we learned about the historical importance of the work of the Sisters of Mercy in education in Northern Ireland as we visited Belfast and engaged in conversation with Rooney Scholar and Carlow adjunct, Marie Martin, her husband Joe Martin, and Molly Onufer, a graduate student at Trinity College. As each colleague experienced the story, presented, and engaged in conversation, the common thread of Mercy wove its own type of enchantment, binding us all as colleagues engaged in this work of Mercy. The following papers are examples of the rich and significant work of the Sixth Carlow University Roundtable.

## Contents

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- 6** Balancing Justice and Mercy in Problematic Student Situations  
*Karla Mason Bergen and Amy Knox Brown, College of Saint Mary*
- 12** Sr. Jane Scully: A Remarkable Journey of Religious Leadership\*  
*Cynthia Busin Nicola, PhD, Carlow University*
- 20** The Importance of Narrative for the Life of Mercy Charism  
*Mary-Paula Cancienne, RSM, PhD, Georgian Court University*
- 24** Learning an Administrative Ethic from Catherine McAuley  
*Amy Ferdinandt Stolley, Grand Valley State University (Formerly Saint Xavier University)*
- 28** The Challenge and the Art of Teaching Mercy Spirituality  
*Johann M. Vento, PhD, Georgian Court University*

# Balancing Justice and Mercy in Problematic Student Situations

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“Properly balancing justice and mercy in the classroom is a line that must be walked by teachers to awaken a motivating sense of the divine discontent in students without instilling devilish discouragement” (Cannon, 1997, para. 1)

One of the conundrums of teaching is balancing compassion with “fairness” in the classroom and in our evaluation of students. We believe this is a dilemma for most teachers, and it takes on a particular urgency when teaching at a Mercy institution where a critical part of our mission involves serving students from marginalized populations (single mothers, ethnic minorities, first-generation college students) who may experience problematic life situations that interfere with their roles and responsibilities as students. We are called to serve these students “through action and education, promotion of compassion and justice” (Stevens, 2004, p. 4), two ideals that often collide when working with students. In this paper, we’ll share our personal experiences with the struggle finding this balance, particularly in regard to issues of classroom attendance, assignments, and evaluation.

We do not claim any particular wisdom but share our challenges to gain insight and to balance our students’ perspectives with our own perspectives as educators and human beings committed to the core values of the Sisters of Mercy. We believe that a key to negotiating the justice-mercy dialectic may lie in the power of narrative, whether shared orally with another or in written form for the purposes of our own reflection and insight. We’ll start by exploring what we mean by *problematic student situation*; provide a *lens* using the Mercy mission; examine in more detail how other educators have struggled to simultaneously fulfill the *values of justice and mercy*; share examples of how we have struggled personally; and finally, suggest a *narrative approach* as one way to gain clarity about how to deal with such situations in the future.

## PROBLEMATIC STUDENT SITUATIONS

Problematic student behavior has been a popular topic for research among academics. When Karla was studying instructional communication during her Master’s program between 2000 and 2002, she became acquainted with a line of research by Plax, Kearney, and colleagues that extensively investigated both student and instructor misbehaviors.<sup>1</sup> There has been a steady stream of research in other disciplines with similar findings about the behaviors that students and instructors view as problematic (e.g., Ausbrooks, Jones, & Tijerina, 2011; Knepp, 2012).

Although frequent readers of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* will recognize the issue of texting and using cell phones and laptops inappropriately during class as particularly aggravating annoyances for many college instructors (e.g., Wiemer, 2014), Ausbrooks et al. (2011) found that students

<sup>1</sup> For a review, see Plax & Kearney (2000).



arriving late or leaving early and talking to other students at inappropriate times actually tied for the “most troublesome” student behaviors among the social work faculty participating in their survey, followed by texting and talking out of turn. Knepp (2012) described four similar student behaviors that faculty in their study generally viewed as problematic. These behaviors included the following: “1) Disrupting class by arriving late or leaving early; 2) Coming to class unprepared; 3) Failing to participate or express interest in the class; and 4) Making demands and unreasonable requests toward the instructor (e.g., extended deadlines, make-up exams, extra credit opportunities) (p. 34). McKeachie’s (2002) *Teaching Tips* dedicated a whole chapter to “Problem Students,” which included not only “angry, aggressive, and challenging students” and “attention seekers,” but inattentive, unprepared, discouraged, and struggling students—and those with excuses for lack of attendance and late work. This last group of students—inattentive, unprepared, discouraged, struggling—often become those with a myriad of excuses and requests for special accommodation, and these are the students who pose a challenge for instructors.

We—perhaps like many of you—have struggled with how to deal with such problematic student situations. Many of us include course policies regarding attendance, late work, and classroom decorum in our syllabi, but it is difficult to cover every possible situation. In addition, we recognize that there may be unexpected and atypical challenges that arise for students in the course of the semester. How, then, do we approach the dilemma of maintaining fairness in our course policies and yet extend grace and compassion to students when it is truly needed?

## THE MERCY MISSION

*“A Mercy institution of higher education . . . demonstrates the values of mercy, justice, and compassion,”*  
 (“Our Catholic Identity and Mercy Charism,” 2010).

We can look to the Mercy mission for guidance. Sister Maryanne Stevens (2004), in her discussion paper on the culture and characteristics of Mercy higher education, noted that, “Mercy and justice, especially toward those most marginalized by society will be evidenced by . . . scholarship programs that reach out to the disenfranchised” (p. 19). Elsewhere in the paper, Stevens described the more specific population that Mercy institutions aim to serve: “those with less, especially women and children” (p. 1). Thus, the students to whom we extend opportunities at our institutions may be more likely to have complicating life circumstances (e.g., single mothers; nontraditional students who are balancing families and jobs with their studies; students with heavy work schedules necessitated by their sole responsibility for their educational expenses). The model of the fresh-out-of-high school student whose parents are footing the bill for her college education does not accurately reflect the experience of the majority of our students.

Karla’s evening section of Communication 101 this past semester reflects a microcosm of the diversity of student situations we regularly encounter in our classrooms. Out of a class of eleven students, seven were traditional-age college students living on campus, and four were nontraditional. (In the following discussion and in all subsequent discussions of specific students, their names have been changed to protect their privacy). Among the nontraditionals, Tanesha—a middle-aged black woman with a family—was employed as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and working toward her nursing degree. Rachel was a young mother pursuing her nursing degree after exiting an abusive relationship. Maria, a single mother in her late twenties, had returned to college to become an

occupational therapist. Maria drove from Lincoln, a city over 50 miles away, for day classes, drove back to Lincoln to pick up her child from daycare to deliver him to a babysitter for the evening, and then drove the 50 miles back to College of St. Mary's campus for the evening class, making her Wednesday commute more than 200 miles. The third single mother, Jackie, lived with her child in our "Mothers Living and Learning" dormitory on campus. Maria was sometimes a few minutes late for class if her tightly-planned schedule didn't go just right, and sometimes Rachel was late back from break due to needing to pump her breasts and occasionally needed to leave early to hand off her older child to his father for visitation.

In short, these students were pursuing an education in the face of incredibly difficult day-to-day circumstances. Their educational pursuits were further complicated by additional challenges. During the course of the semester, Tanesha sustained a severe back injury lifting a patient at her job, and during treatment for this injury, was diagnosed with an ectopic pregnancy, for which she required surgery and had to miss three weeks of classes. One of the traditional age students, Mary, experienced the loss of her sister and brother-in-law in a horrific murder-suicide. Jenny was diagnosed with depression and anxiety disorder and struggled with assignments and class attendance during the second half of the semester. (All this in just one class of eleven students!)

Karla felt that she could not serve these students adequately, let alone compassionately, by pointing to the course policies in the syllabus and insisting they be followed to the "letter of the law." Over the semester, attendance requirements were bent, quizzes were offered online using the course management system, and makeup speeches were allowed. However, evaluating each set of circumstances on its individual merit and tailoring accommodations can be exhausting and raise questions in one's mind (as well as perhaps in the minds of the other students in the class) about fairness. We may wonder: are we, in essence, giving students in difficult situations credit for the difficult situations—rather than credit for their work?

## **THE CONUNDRUM OF JUSTICE VS. MERCY**

We are quite sure that we are not unique in struggling with this problem; in fact, we realize that having only about a dozen years of teaching at a Mercy institution between us, we are relatively new to this game. However, we struggle with questions such as: "Is it "fair" to lower standards or grant a "hardship exemption" from standard classroom policies stemming from a sense of compassion for a student's unique circumstances?"

Reading about the struggles of others wrestling with the same issues has been informative, (for example, see Cannon, 1997; Givens, 2014; and Skousen, 2014), as has reading literature on teaching and learning. Cannon (1997) described the issue as one of "when to use sugar—and when a stick," but ultimately counseled that "kindness...must precede sternness" (p. 42), and that that kindness must be born of spiritual discernment and an effort to put one's value of Christian compassion into practice in the classroom.

What of the issue of "fairness"? Fairness is given prominent lip-service in the American culture, although we might disagree about what is "fair." Very much in line with Catholic social teaching, McKeachie (2002) points out that *equality* and *fairness* are not necessarily the same. He contends that,



“equal treatment involves not necessarily the same treatment...but treatment that respects the individual circumstances of particular learners” (p. 145). He elaborates:

Although we may readily accept different treatment for students who are disabled or are nonnative speakers or are older students who have hearing impairments or work slowly, we might find it much more difficult to justify different treatment based on gender, socioeconomic status, or cultural characteristics. Once again, however, beginning with the individual student is important. It is important to have expectations that are appropriate to the student. Some disjuncture between the student’s point of entry and the dominant culture may occur, and balance should be sought. (p. 145)

Sister Mary Sullivan also offers insight as to what balancing the values of justice and mercy might look like in Mercy higher education.

Merciful behavior does not have to mean that an institution has to lower its academic or grading standards...rather, what is involved is...the willingness to listen to and experience the ‘other side’ of situations—the language, the look in the eyes, the presence of compassion. (Sullivan, 2006, p. 25)

We believe that the “willingness to... experience the ‘other side’” offers an opportunity to put ourselves in students’ shoes and intentionally articulate what we believe to be their perspectives as well as intentionally articulating our own perspectives—which can be a useful tool in sorting out these problematic situations in which we find ourselves.

## **A NARRATIVE SOLUTION?**

Narrative means, essentially, a story—whether based in truth or fiction. Stories entertain us while at the same time asking us to consider the issues that vex human beings in our efforts to live morally accountable lives. Take, for instance, Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice*, which explicitly explores the issues of justice and mercy. In the play, Portia—in defense of her husband’s dear friend, who is about to forfeit a pound of his own flesh to satisfy a debt to the villainous Shylock—offers the following speech on the qualities of mercy and justice:

The quality of mercy is not strained;  
 It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
 Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest;  
 It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:  
 ‘T is mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes  
 The throned monarch better than his crown:  
 His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,  
 The attribute to awe and majesty,  
 Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;  
 But mercy is above this sceptred sway;  
 It is enthronèd in the hearts of kings,  
 It is an attribute to God himself;

And earthly power doth then show likest God's  
When mercy seasons justice. (p. 236)

Short stories (and, as in the example above, drama) have the power to allow us to understand experiences completely different from our own as authors pull us into what John Gardner (1991) calls the “vivid and continuous” (p. 31) dream, where the action unfolding on the page creates a compelling picture in our minds, as if we were watching a movie. To fully involve the reader in the story, the author uses the elements of narrative writing—including plot, setting, specific sensory details, and characterization. For our purposes, the most relevant element is that of *point of view*, which refers to both “person” (first person=I; second person=you; third person=he/she) as well as perspective (that is, who exactly the speaker is: a thirteen-year-old boy; an elderly woman living in Alaska; a young man who resents his older brother).

In *Writing: The Sacred Art*, Shapiro and Shapiro (2014) discuss how writing can function as an opportunity to open our minds, hearts, and spirits. They shun the simple platitudes of “spiritual writing,” which they believe allows people to simply reiterate the tired scripts of “conventional” truths and fail to grow in understanding by questioning their own assumptions, motives, and comfortable stories. Instead, the authors believe that writing offers the opportunity to explore larger truths, which will, faced squarely, take one out of her comfort zone. In the chapter “Writing to Open the Heart,” Shapiro and Shapiro consider how writing—using narrative to truly attempt to understand—the perspective of another person can offer opportunities for spiritual growth and, we believe, a chance to balance the ideals of justice and mercy.

Their chapter on “Writing to Open the Heart” suggests there are two emotions that govern our lives: love and fear (p. 31).

We have compassion, for our friends and family, for our neighbors, for those caught up in calamity—hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, famine, disease—but sometimes, too often, our compassion serves our convenience. Sometimes we cannot muster compassion at all. That is why I am more moved by Jesus’ admonition to “love your enemy” (Matthew 5:44) than I am by his (and Leviticus’) command to “love your neighbor” (Leviticus 19:18; Mark 12:31). (p. 41)

Shapiro and Shapiro go on to explain this perspective: “When Jesus tells us to “love our enemies,” I think he is challenging us to meet them, to get to know them for who they are rather than who we imagine them to be” (p. 44).

We don’t mean to posit students as enemies—they’re certainly not. At the same time, how often do we, as teachers, find ourselves in a position where “the student”—especially the student with issues, the student who is not doing the work she needs to do, the student who is asking for special exceptions—is simply, in our minds, a stereotype, “that student,” whom we face with (however well-disguised) exasperation, a sense that we “know her story” (lazy, unable to manage her time well, unwilling to face challenges) and how much easier is it to make decisions based on justice alone (“These are the rules, and they apply to everyone equally”) when mercy requires us to take on a more nuanced perspective of her situation?

An exercise in the book, “Dear Hated One,” asks you to consider the perspective of someone with whom you’ve had difficulties (p. 47). The authors note that the goal of this exercise is to open your heart to a “very specific idea: people...are doing the best with what they’ve got” (p. 46). The exercise asks you to write your own understanding/version of the situation, then to shift your perspective to the other person’s. “Don’t pretend to be her and write an excuse for her behavior. Write an analysis suggesting why her behavior was, given the situation at that moment, inevitable” (p. 47).

We used this exercise in our experiment to see whether or how narrative might complicate our understanding of students’ situations and whether it might help us balance the considerations of justice and mercy when dealing with students during the spring semester of 2015. What happens when you take on someone else’s perspective? What happens when you tell the story from her point of view? Does it impact your own response to her behavior? Here are some examples from our experience.

#### Student 1: Carrie (Amy)

Carrie was taking an online course, Women Writers. Because the students are asked to introduce themselves at the beginning of the class, I was privy to some information about her life: she was involved in sports and student government; she was majoring in nursing; she liked to read, craft, eat.

And here I will admit my own bias: I graduated from law school before I completed my PhD in English, and I have, I think, internalized the notion of justice to the extent that it’s sometimes difficult for me to be flexible. In law school, a missed deadline could cause you to fail a course (and no one cared why you’d missed the deadline; the fact that it was missed was reason enough). The rationale behind this strictness connected to the significance of deadlines in the legal profession. If an attorney failed to file certain documents on time, cases were thrown out of court. Our professors pointed out that missing an appeal deadline for a client on death row could have truly fatal consequences. Furthermore, law students were trained to accept the fact that laws applied to everyone without exception, an idea that influenced my idea regarding course requirements when I began teaching.

At the same time, I believe I am a perfectly reasonable person.

Carrie turned in two assignments on time. Especially in an online course, it’s crucial for the assignments to be posted by deadlines, since the students respond to each other on discussion boards, and posting late impacts the ability of others to complete the work. Carrie’s third assignment was late. She wrote me an email: *Hope you will still accept this. It was done on time but I just forgot to post it.*

While I appreciated Carrie’s honesty—she was owning up to the actual reason she hadn’t completed the work on time—I felt myself thinking: *Deadlines are deadlines. They need to be met. Or else.*

Before I responded to Carrie, however, I tried to imagine the situation from her perspective. Not just tried to imagine, but actually wrote, using the first-person perspective of Carrie, what might have led to her forgetting the assignment: *I’m involved with student government, and we have an important issue we’re considering. My major is nursing, and those classes are particularly important to me, so the requirements for them are foremost in my mind. I try to stay on top of things, but sometimes it’s a challenge with so much to do.*

What was useful—for me—was that this exercise took the edge off (what I realized was) my initial response of self-righteous indignation: *What do you mean, you forgot the work you did for my class?* Clearly, the student had other legitimate obligations. Even so, her chosen profession—nursing—was one that demanded special accountability to deadlines and requirements. While the ultimate outcome was the same as if I had not considered her perspective—I told her that material had to be submitted by deadlines to receive credit—my email to her was more nuanced (*I appreciate your honesty, and I understand you're busy. It's important for the other students to have your work by the deadline so they can meet their own deadlines*), and I was able to let go of that indignation almost immediately. Being able to see the student as other than a stereotype as a slacker helped me keep the relationship with her “fresh”—that is, my feelings toward her weren't clouded with the expectation she would continue to ask for exceptions or with the baggage of the stereotype of “that student.” Taking Carrie's perspective on this small issue helped me understand how my own biases were maintained by a rote reliance on justice. The student subsequently met all the deadlines, demonstrating an accountability that would be necessary in her work as a health professional.

#### Student 2: Jenny (Karla)

Jenny was the student in my small evening 101 class who suffered a bout of severe depression and anxiety during the semester, and was, in fact, at the end of the semester, still struggling, in spite of being under a doctor's care and taking medication. I'd had Jenny the previous semester in my Gender and Communication class, where she was an attentive and involved student. Jenny started out the semester in the Oral Communications class just fine. She attended class, participated in discussions, completed assignments, and did well on both speeches and quizzes. Shortly before midterm, however, it became apparent that all was not well with Jenny. She seemed fidgety and uncomfortable in class. About halfway through class one evening, she said she wasn't feeling well and told me that she needed to go home.

Jenny missed class the next week, but the following week asked to speak to me privately during the break and hesitantly told me that she'd been diagnosed with depression and had started on medication. Her doctor had told her it would help her to start feeling better within a couple of weeks, but she wanted me to know that she was still having hard time. I told her that I was glad that she had confided in me and hoped that she'd feel better soon. During the second half of the semester, Jenny missed four of eight classes, including her final speech. Because she stayed in touch with me via email, notifying me all but the last class period when she missed her final speech, I allowed her to make up small-stakes reading quizzes without the documentation required by the syllabus policy. I made an exception for Jenny, because, having suffered from depression myself, I understood the debilitating fatigue that can make doing the smallest things a tremendous effort.

The day after the missed speech, Jenny contacted me by email saying that she had been in the emergency room the night before, but had a doctor's note. Would she be permitted to make up her speech? I replied that since she had the required documentation, I would certainly allow her to make up the speech and arranged to meet her in the classroom two days later. Jenny appeared at the appointed hour and presented her speech. At its conclusion, she went to her book bag to produce the doctor's note, which I had failed to ask for before the speech. After looking in several different compartments of the bag, Jenny couldn't find the document. She assured me that she must have left it

in her room and would scan the note and send it to me via email.

A few days elapsed with no email from Jenny. It was time to figure grades for the course. I emailed Jenny to remind her. Two days later, I emailed her to remind her again, warning her that if I did not have the documentation, I would not be able to include the points from the final speech in her course grade. I submitted grades for all the other students in the course. I left Jenny's grade blank. I waited. The day of the deadline for spring grades came. I was torn. On the one hand, I wanted to give Jenny a merciful break: *"I know how hard it is to gather motivation when a person is depressed, and I know it can make you forgetful."* On the other hand, the issue of justice to other students in the class who had produced doctor's notes to make up work on account of their own difficult situations reared its head: *"I feel like I've cut you a break all semester. You knew that the conditions of making up the speech included showing documentation. I feel like you're taking advantage of me. Maybe you weren't really in the emergency room the night of your speech and never had documentation to begin with..."*

Trying to take Jenny's perspective. I imagined her going back to her room after her speech and flopping down on her bed thinking, *"I am so glad to be done with this semester. I am so tired. I am looking forward to some down time this summer and hope this medication kicks in soon. I hope I'll be feeling better by fall."* Although I deeply empathized with Jenny's situation, I felt that out of fairness to others in the class, I needed to hold her accountable. After all, the speech had been made up after Jenny stated that she had the required doctor's note. I reached a compromise with myself by sending Jenny the following email:

*"I'm entering your final grade for the course that was figured without the points for your final presentation, given that I never received the doctor's note. If you can locate and scan it, I will be happy to enter the points for that presentation and change your final grade."*

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Dana Mackenzie, in her story, "Justice and Mercy," recounted the story of a problematic student situation at the Ohio college where there had been a recent change in a program that allowed a student to give a senior presentation in lieu of a comprehensive exam. One young man, "Alex," thinking that the presentation was the way to go, presented a very poorly conceived project that did not pass his committee. He would have to take the comprehensive. His committee of six faculty labored to design an exam that would specifically assess the young man's strengths and decided that they would accept 50% as a passing grade. When the student took the exam, it was apparent that Alex would not even meet the low bar set by his committee and, thus, would not graduate. The committee discussed, debated, and put the matter to a vote. The advisor abstained. Two members voted to pass Alex and two voted to fail. The deciding vote was in the hands of the department curmudgeon, long-known for his unmerciful grading standards. Unexpectedly, stunning the rest of the committee, the curmudgeon quietly weighed in, "In this case, I think we should choose to temper justice with mercy" (p. 3). Mackenzie reflected,

Teaching, especially with grading and evaluating part of it, is a constantly changing balance of justice and mercy. Every teacher must learn to balance the scales in his or her own way, and with every student, the balance is a little bit different. Before the [above] incidents, I thought the scales balanced the same way for everybody, and I would not have acknowledged

a difference between showing mercy and selling out. It's still a line I cannot draw with any reliability, but I can now name a few landmarks between which it must pass. Mercy is giving one student a chance, one at a time. Selling out is erasing history for a whole class of twenty. Mercy is looking deep into your own heart and the heart of the person whose fate is in your hands, knowing the two are inextricably bound. Selling out is deciding on convenience and hearsay. Mercy is the flip side of justice. Selling out is no coin at all. (p. 5)

## FINAL THOUGHTS

*Karla reflects:* Even though Jenny has ended the semester with a “D,” I have come to the conclusion that if I have to err one way or the other, I more often will err on the side of mercy. Although I sometimes fear being seen as a “pushover,” I take heart in something that Mary Sullivan wrote about Catherine McAuley: “Catherine [McAuley] was never above a little tenderness and doting” (p. 20). Perhaps it is my mother’s heart, perhaps I can blame it on a spiritual gift of mercy, perhaps it is generosity sometimes to a fault. I would rather risk being thought a fool than not extending compassion to someone in need. Although Jenny will likely not be happy with the “D,” I have left the door open for the possibility of changing her grade if she can hold up her end of the bargain. As much as I wanted to give her a “pass” on producing the verified excuse the night of the final presentation, I ultimately decided that it wasn’t fair to other students who had gone out of their way to secure documentation for their absences. Although I had and continue to have tremendous compassion for Jenny and her circumstances, I felt that her circumstances didn’t excuse her from being held accountable.

*Amy reflects:* My natural instincts continue to fall, I’m afraid, more on the side of justice than mercy, which is why the reflection exercise has proven particularly useful for me. At the end of the spring semester of 2015, I was confronted with a problematic situation: a senior student, Sally, scheduled for graduation, was receiving a D in her Senior Seminar course. The low grade was due to the student’s failure to submit an assignment that had been due in January. A grade of C was necessary for her to receive her diploma.

I emailed Sally about the situation. She turned in the missing assignment, immediately. The submitted assignment brought her grade in the class to a 72.76, which was a C-, still lower than the C she needed.

This is what I know of the student’s story: she’d intended to obtain a degree in secondary education, but she’d failed to maintain control of the classroom when she’d been student teaching, and so she was unable to fulfill the requirements for the education degree. She did, however, have adequate credits to major in English, so she changed her major to a different field. She’d experienced abuse growing up, and during the Spring semester of 2015, her family life had been chaotic. I’d had Sally in a previous class, where she’d been an exemplary student.

Should a quarter of a point keep her from graduating? The online gradebook was merciless: her score was a C-. I thought of a phrase I’d read in cases in law school: *totality of the circumstances*. Only someone like Shylock, the villain in Merchant of Venice, bent on receiving his pound of flesh at any cost, would have insisted on the letter of the law in this case.



## THE EXERCISE

Now we'd like to invite you to try this exercise. Think of a problematic situation with a student. Write a three to five sentence description of the situation from your own point of view. Make note, as well, of anything you know about the student's situation (major, life challenges, etc.) Now, using the first-person ("I"), write a description of the situation from the student's perspective. You're not trying to justify excuses; rather, you're trying to understand her situation. (This can be more difficult than it sounds. The initial instinct may be to present the student's point-of-view as an exercise in excuse-making: *Yeah, I know I was supposed to do this, but...*)

Did the exercise change your perception of the situation in any way? Would this exercise have impacted the way you handled the situation?

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# Sr. Jane Scully: A Remarkable Journey of Religious Leadership\*

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## INTRODUCTION

In *The Leadership Challenge* (Kouzes, 2002), Kouzes and Posner state that story telling is a public form of communication (p. 359). We pass lessons from one generation to the next through this wonderful art form...stories are meant to be told. Organizations not only should use storytelling to illustrate standards and values, they have a responsibility to do so. David Armstrong, former CEO and President of Armstrong International, was a firm believer in the power of stories. He published eight books on the art before passing away in 2010. He felt stories can be effective tools that contain life lessons. As a result, they are both “fun and inspiring” (p. 380) and can be used to “teach, mobilize, and motivate” (p. 381). Klein (as cited in Kouzes and Posner, 2002) likewise believes storytelling can pass along “lessons that we learn from highly challenging situations” (p. 383).

The following story is about an amazing woman religious, Sr. Jane Scully. It is being written at her request so that her legacy in female religious leadership may be an example to others who aspire to similar positions as she has held. It is a composite of her journey: her family, her school years, her profession and experiences as a Religious Sister of Mercy and her years as college president during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s – interesting and challenging times for women in general, let alone in business or higher education. It is a journey of faith, hope, and love – love for her vocation, for her Order, for women, for education, for her God. It is also a journey richly threaded with service, a journey she will embrace until her life on earth is spent.

Sr. Jane is widely known as an advocate for women’s education, and her journey to the presidency of Mt. Mercy is an interesting, and unexpected, one. After graduating from Mt. Mercy in 1939, Sr. Jane’s initial job was to work for Catholic Charities as a social worker. At the time, she was pursuing her master degree in social work. She felt compelled to enter the Religious Sisters of Mercy in 1940 and quickly found devotion to the values of Catherine McAuley. Her main focus became women’s education, and she served in varied capacities: ten years teaching in parochial schools, librarian at St. Xavier’s Academy from 1947-48, college librarian from 1950-1962, Director of Development of the college from 1962-1966, Vice President for Community Relations from 1965-1966, and Assistant to the President from 1962-1965. Concurrent to these appointments, she served as an Associate Professor in the English Department. **Overall, she has devoted 33 years to Mt. Mercy/Carlow and has an outstanding 72 years as a Sister of Mercy.**

Sr. Jane became the 6th President of Carlow University in 1966. She served Mt. Mercy/Carlow from 1966-1982, a 16-year tenure. Many do not realize she was the first President to also be an alum of Mt. Mercy.

Her professional achievements outside Carlow are impressive as well (see attached vitae for further detail). Among the **17 Boards** she has served on are: Gulf Oil Corporation, (she was the first woman religious to serve on the board of a major corporation), Port Authority Transit, Pennsylvania Council for Higher Education, Pittsburgh Symphony, Mercy Hospital, Gallaudet College, Urban League of Pittsburgh, Duquesne Club (Jane was the first woman member), Pennsylvania Public Television Committee, Health and Rehabilitation Services Commission of Allegheny County, American Library Association, Women's College Coalition, Miryam's House, Pennsylvania Association of Colleges and Universities.

Sr. Jane's contributions are numerous. Below is a brief list of contributions to both her own institution and, overall, to education and business. She once stated that her "most urgent concern continues to be the education of women as women and the ever-increasing opportunities for their advancement as persons in society." (Caren Marcus, *Pittsburgh Press*, nd) and she firmly believed "When man speaks to man with respect for his thoughts and concern for him as an individual, this is the aristocracy of spirit." (*Post-Gazette*, December 30, 1967). Sr. Jane has innate entrepreneurial and leadership capabilities that have served the college, the community, business, and the Sisters of Mercy.

**Public Leadership Education Network**– Sr. Jane worked to add Carlow to PLEN in 1978 in order to encourage women to get involved in public life.

**Curriculum revision** – Sr. Jane sought to further develop Carlow's academic programming. Under her leadership the following were developed and/or expanded: Black Studies, Women's Studies, Business Management, Environmental Studies, Peace Studies, Speech Communication, and Theater. She likewise established the Office of Continuing Education in 1971 to address adult student needs and Weekend College in 1978. Sr. Jane was a strong proponent for a liberal arts-based curriculum with room for additional curricular development in the professions.

**Regina Medal** – Sr. Jane personally established this award in 1959 for the **Catholic Library Association** and worked with Sr. M. Owen, RSM, Art Department, to sketch the medal design.

Sr. Jane changed the name of **Mt. Mercy to Carlow** in 1969. This effort gave Carlow an independent, public face and ended public confusion with Mercy hospitals and other Mercy colleges.

Sr. Jane headed fundraising efforts to build **Grace Library** in 1969.

She likewise expanded **Carlow Board of Trustees** in the 1970's, including a more diverse group of professionals.

Institutionally, she established the **Faculty Senate, Faculty Assembly, and Staff Assembly** at Carlow in an effort to establish shared governance by providing a formal forum for deliberation and discussion for each major stakeholder group.

She established a “Free University” at Carlow where anyone on campus could teach on a topic of interest – students, faculty or staff.

She assisted in establishing **PCHE (Pittsburgh Council on Higher Education)** in 1966, a voluntary council of colleges that seek to share resources, engage in discussion on matters of higher education, and who develop cooperative projects.

Sr. Jane is an educator and administrator who also is a woman religious. First and foremost, **Sr. Jane has gone where God has taken her.** She never saw herself in the roles that are noted on this form. She wanted to devote her life to God and, as a result of that strong devotion, did what was asked of her. She felt every opportunity was a chance to serve others and God.

Manning and Curtis (2012, pp. 147-8) in the *Art of Leadership*, discuss: “Robert Greenleaf states that leadership is a calling to serve. This calling begins with the feeling deep inside that one cares about people and wants to help others... The great leader is a servant first, and that is the secret of his or her greatness...”. Sr. Jane never hesitated when called to serve in any capacity. In one interview, when she was elected to Gulf Oil, she stated that the “opportunity to serve on Gulf Oil’s board is ‘a greater chance to build the kingdom of God, greater than any other force in my life...’” (The Observer, September, 1978).

Sr. Jane Scully, currently 96 years of age, is still remembered in many circles as a woman of passion, enthusiasm, and intelligence. The impact of her work can only be imagined through the significant number of awards (32) and honorary degrees (5) that have been bestowed on this amazing woman. Among them:

- *National Conference of Christians and Jews* – honored Sr. Jane in April 1979. She was chosen for “...exemplifying the religious ideals of brotherhood and justice in human relationships.” [Betty Pickett, executive director]
- *Pittsburgh Press* – honored Sr. Scully as one of “Most Interesting Women of 1968”, December, 1968.
- Pittsburgh’s “Man of the Year in Education”, 1973
- *Redbook*, “Women of the Month”, 1975
- Pennsylvania Commonwealth award: “Distinguished Daughters of Pennsylvania”, 1976
- (5) Honorary Doctorate Degrees from: Allentown College of Sacred Heart, Susquehanna University, Lafayette College, Marymount Manhattan College, and Carlow University.

Sr. Jane has been interviewed 31 times and these interviews reached worldwide audiences. In addition to being interviewed by local radio and television stations in Pittsburgh, she was interviewed by reporters in New York, London, Ireland, St. Louis, Boston, and Los Angeles. She even had an article published in Germany on her election to her board position with Gulf Oil.

Sr. Jane Camillus/Scully embraced the values of Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy when she chose her life vocation in 1940. She has carried those values forward in all that she has accomplished in the field of education, in public service, and in business. She exemplifies the original purpose of Mt. Mercy College – to educate women to become “the true scholar, the true woman, for true service.” Here’s her story. Enjoy.

## **CHAPTER 1: LATE 1820 – 1920, IMMIGRATION AND CATHOLIC EDUCATION**

There was a steady stream of immigrants to the United States from 1820-1920. Of the 8,385 immigrants in 1820, 43% were Irish. That number of immigrants climbed to almost 600,000 by 1840, just twenty years later, and the majority continued to be from Ireland and Germany. Immigration declined in the 1860’s because of the Civil War in the United States. By 1870, Ohio and Pennsylvania boasted huge waves of immigrants to provide much-needed labor for coal mining and railroad expansion. Many of these laborers came from Wales and Norway. From 1871 to 1890, immigrants came from southern and eastern Europe to help industrialize our nation. Many were escaping poverty and religious persecution in their homelands. Numbers climbed to 5,246,613 by 1890 with over 300,000 from Italy and over 265,000 from Poland and Russia. All in all, the 40-year period from 1890 to 1920 boasted 24 million immigrants from the following countries: Italy, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Hungary, Croatia, and Russia (Bankston, 2010; uh.edu, 2012).

After the Civil War ended, educated Catholics complained that the clergy and seminary education overall was inferior or had “intellectual shortcomings” (O’Brien, 1994). Catholic clergy responded to these claims by establishing schools to promote Catholicism: local bishops controlled elementary and secondary schools, but any colleges were controlled by their founding religious order. College administrators, as a result, took on full control and began to be detached from church officials (p. 37).

Bishop Michael O’Connor, the first bishop of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, was recognized widely for his dedication to Catholic education in western Pennsylvania. Once, while visiting Carlow, Ireland in 1843, he became familiar with the Sisters of Mercy Order and their unique mission of educating women. Sister Frances Warde, head of the convent in Carlow, was petitioned by Bishop O’Connor to bring Catholic women’s education to Pittsburgh in the United States (Nicola, 1996; Banovatz and Seamen, 1976). Sr. Warde agreed, and she and six other Mercy nuns left Carlow, arriving in Pittsburgh on December 21, 1843 (Nicola, 1996).

One year later, the Order established St. Mary’s Academy on Penn Street and eventually purchased the present site of Carlow University in Oakland from an Ursuline Order of nuns in 1894. St. Mary’s moved to this new location and was renamed “Our Lady of Mercy Academy”; here Mercy nuns educated girls at the elementary and secondary levels for roughly 35 years (Catholic Historical Society, 1943; Nicola, 1996).

In 1898, Catholic higher education was seen as part of the Church’s strategy to evangelize American Culture and in 1899, the Vatican communicated its condemnation of “Americanism”



and “modernism” (O’Brien, 1994, p. 40). The Association of Catholic Colleges in the United States was formed, and it defined the purpose of higher education as forming “citizens for the city of God” while “fitting people for the business of life” (p. 41). Around 1900, there was not only a movement to expand the numbers of Catholic high schools but also a movement to expand higher education for women. The first four-year college for women, College of Notre Dame in Maryland, was founded in 1895 and by 1910, just fifteen years later, there were thirteen Catholic women’s colleges. Most programs were designed in the areas of nursing, education, and social work. Likewise, the founding religious orders of women allowed their own to become further educated and many assumed leadership roles (O’Brien, 1994, p. 42). For women, leadership roles were uncharacteristic of the times.

In the decade of the 1920’s, the Catholic Church saw itself as a “custodian of culture” and Catholic schools (elementary through college) as a means to prepare Catholics for middle class life (O’Brien, 1994, p. 25). There was a movement to discourage attending public schools as well as a movement to discourage Catholics from attending secular colleges (p. 41) – the Catholic Church criticized secularism and materialism openly. Catholic teachings were to be the foundational elements used to solve social ills.

This decade brought increasing pressure for Pittsburgh to open a Catholic college for women. Since the Sisters of Mercy were known now for Catholic women’s education, they were naturally urged to begin education at the baccalaureate level. Mother Dougherty, then President of the Sisters of Mercy in Pittsburgh, looked into the possibility of expansion into higher education, but the Order was legally advised against doing so because of the limits of their charter. Despite this advice, they founded Mt. Mercy College in 1929 and began offering college classes to 24 freshmen, holding classes at the convent and at the academy. Until a separate legal charter could be approved, Mt. Mercy students would be formally part of Duquesne University and receive degrees from that institution, showing coursework at Mt. Mercy. A separate charter was approved in 1933; the foundation of what is now known as Carlow University had been laid (Gillespie, personal communication, April 22, 1927; Nicola, 1996; Banovatz and Seamen, 1976; Dougherty, personal communication, 1930; Harper, 1931; Decree of Incorporation of Mount Mercy College, 1933; Dougherty, personal communication, March 11, 1933). Mother Irenaeus Dougherty, first President of Mount Mercy, remained in office until 1947, an astounding eighteen years as both head of the Mercy Order and the college. The first Dean, Sr. Regis Grace, served in that capacity from 1929–1952 (Nicola, 1996).

#### A Snapshot in Time: 1920s

1920: League of Nations formed in effort to preserve world peace

1921: Lenin introduces economic program to boost growth in USSR

1922: USSR forms

1922: Mussolini forms Fascist regime

1923: Equal Rights Amendment penned by Alice Paul

1924: Hitler writes *Mein Kampf*

1929: Great depression in Europe and US, threw many into unemployment, many lost everything, lasted 10 years

## CHAPTER 2: THE 1930s

In the 1930s United States, Catholics were predominantly blue collar workers and Catholic Churches were small immigrant (ethnic) churches with the parishes being an extension of a shared minority family (O'Brien, 1994). In Europe, the Catholic Church was involved in anti-Semitism, war, and fascism, all unknown to their United States counterparts.

In 1935, the Committee on Educational Policy and Program of the College and University Department of the Catholic Educational Association passed a resolution demanding that Catholicism be seen as a culture and the integral part of a Catholic liberal arts education (O'Brien, 1994). Religion was rarely taught on the undergraduate level and, in 1939, John Murray urged the introduction of theology courses into college curricula – most women's colleges responded, but male colleges continued to rely on philosophy rather than theology (p. 43). In addition, most Catholic colleges changed curricula to respond to societal demands and many in response to what their secular counterparts were offering at the time. Secular colleges were seen as competition and, as a result, teaching the classics began to fall by the wayside (p. 44). Women also began to be admitted to male institutions, even though women's colleges continued to be established. Sr. Jane Scully recalls that Catholic colleges in the United States were not as highly regarded as public universities ...there was, in her words, a "lingering Catholic bias about the quality of education" (personal communication, January, 2012).

### Mt. Mercy Enrollment:

1933: 128 students  
 1934: 151 students  
 1935: 175 students  
 1936: 206 students  
 1937: 215 students  
 1938: 230 students  
 1939: 726 students

### A Snapshot in Time: 1930s

Great period of political turmoil worldwide and economic hardship

1933: Hitler becomes chancellor of Germany

1933: Roosevelt establishes "New Deal" as part of economic recovery program. Social Security System part of this.

1939: WWII begins

## CHAPTER 3: THE 1940s

After World War II ended in 1945, millions of Catholics went to college as a result of the GI Bill. Many Catholic men went in to professional positions, became leaders of corporations, and married Catholic women. They moved into suburbs that were no longer divided by ethnicity but which were now based on socioeconomic standing. Catholic colleges and universities prospered, and the Catholic population began to mirror society at large. O'Brien (1994) refers to this as a liberation story...post WWII Catholics were more educated and more prosperous, in contrast to the previous generation of immigrants who were poor and uneducated. The government was concerned with developing a highly industrialized society, so demand for programs in education, law, business, medicine, nursing, and engineering became paramount, with the government paying for many programs. Catholic undergraduate and graduate programs adjusted curricula accordingly to meet

these demands and liberal arts curricula continued to be less emphasized. There was a concurrent move to recruit professionally trained faculty (pp. 45-53).

The years between 1945 and 1965 were considered the “boom years” for higher education in general, and the population of the Catholic Church in the USA doubled during these years. In 1945 (O’Brien, 1994, p. 53), Catholic institutions had 92,000 students; this grew incredibly to 220,000 within three years. Several causes were attributed to this growth: first, sources of financial support weren’t hard to come by, in light of the GI Bill; and mass attendance was at an all-time high with the expanding middle class. In addition, Catholic higher education and charitable work among lay Catholics grew (p. 45).

At the time Jane Scully entered the convent, Mother Irenaeus Dougherty was President of Mt. Mercy as well as Mother Superior. From 1940 to 1941, Sr. Jane Camillus/Scully taught grade 4 (all subjects) in the Mercy Mission Schools in: Cecil, Muse, Coal Center and Meadowlands, PA. From 1942- 1943, she went after and received a Senatorial Scholarship which allowed her to continue her studies for a Bachelor of Science in Library Science from the Carnegie Institute of Technology Library School at the University of Pittsburgh. In 1944, she worked as librarian at St. Xavier’s Academy in Latrobe and, in 1945, she made her final profession (Sisters of Mercy, 2011).

From 1943 to 1945, Sr. Jane taught grades 5, 6, and 7 at St. Cyril of Alexandria School in Pittsburgh; her main subjects were Science and English. In the summer of 1946, she worked at Mercy Hospital in laundry services. From 1946-1947, Sr. Jane taught at St. Paul Cathedral High School, grades 9, 10, 11, 12. Her subject specialties were Religion, English, and Journalism. In the summer of 1947, she worked at St. Mary Convent on Webster Avenue in Pittsburgh. And in 1947-48, she returned to St. Xavier’s in Latrobe to manage the library and teach English and Library Instruction. She also headed the Newspaper (Sisters of Mercy, 2011). Catholic education was in demand throughout the United States since the overall Catholic population from 1945-1948 went from 92,000 to 220,000 (Nicola, 1996). 1947 saw a change in college leadership – Mother M. Francella McConnell became President, serving in that office until 1952.

From 1948 to 1949, Sr. Jane worked toward a Master’s Degree in Library Science from the University of Michigan. She was permitted to work toward this degree on a full-time basis and, when completed, she was made a full-time instructor at Mt. Mercy College in 1949. From 1949 through 1966, she held and navigated through the following positions at Mt. Mercy (Sisters of Mercy, 2011) .

#### Mt. Mercy Enrollment:

1940: 676 students  
 1941: 725 students  
 1942: 759 students  
 1943: 746 students  
 1944: 541 students  
 1945: 857 students  
 1946: 803 students  
 1947: 971 students  
 1948: no information  
 1949: 1137 students

#### A Snapshot in Time: 1940s

1941: Pearl Harbor attacked, pulling US into WWII  
 1941-45: Holocaust. The total of the Jewish victims is over 5,750,000  
 1945: WWII ends, US dropped atomic bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima  
 1947: Marshall Plan developed in USA to help aid foreign countries  
 1948: Communist Josef Stalin seizes Czechoslovakia  
 1949: Simone de Beauvoir -“The Second Sex” claiming women needed liberation

## CHAPTER 4: THE 1950s

Two words became widely used in the 1950s in regards to the modernization of Catholic schools and changes in Catholic education that many found unpopular: “Americanization” and “secularization” (O’Brien, 1994, p. 22). At this time, Catholics wondered if the Church’s previous stance against getting involved in politics and cultural issues were partly responsible for the atrocities of WWII. In organization, Catholic universities were controlled by their founding religious order; they had autonomy from the diocese. Religious superiors kept control – such control even took the form of faculty contracts which included clauses that stated that faculty could be dismissed for “offenses against Catholic doctrine or morality or American national security” (p. 43). Bishops were “proud” of Catholic colleges but gave little financial support (p. 43).

One of the best-selling books from 1949–1950 was Paul Blanchard’s *American Freedom and Catholic Power* (1949). Blanchard strongly criticized the Catholic Church as filling its members with propaganda, mainly in the area of medicine. Then in 1955, an essay was published which was likewise critical; this time it criticized Catholic higher education. The essay, “American Catholics and the Intellectual Life”, by historian John Ellis stated that there was a lack of significant “intellectual achievement by American Catholics” (O’Brien, 1994, p. 46). Ellis also felt there were too many Catholic colleges and universities that displayed not only little cooperation but little effort toward any serious research. Such public criticism opened the door for debate on the overall quality of Catholic higher education which would later coincide with the call for change during the Second Vatican Council (p. 46). At the center of this debate was what was meant by “excellence” in education. This question continued to cause many to look at, and pattern curricula, after the secular universities (p. 47). According to Sr. Jane, the “[The period of the] 1950s to 1970s – the whole world was under a self-study because of Vatican II” (personal communication, March, 2011).

The decade of the 1950s was an important one for growth at the college. From 1949 through 1957, majors were added in the following areas: Nursing, Art, Latin, Botany, Zoology, Voice, Physics, and Speech Therapy. Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) conducted a review in 1951 and encouraged the Mount Mercy to incorporate in its purpose “provision of vocational training” and to consider identifying itself as a “woman’s college” rather than a “liberal arts college” (Nicola, 1996). In 1952, Mother Mary Margaret Corbett became President of Mount Mercy (serving until 1960). Under her tenure, Sr. Thomas Aquinas (Elizabeth Carroll), Dean from 1952–1963, worked diligently to strengthen the liberal arts throughout the curriculum while designating particular majors as “preparation for careers” in the Mount Mercy Catalog (Nicola, 1996).

Beginning with the 1940s and now through the 1950s, Sr. Jane worked in the missions in Uniontown, taught the boys’ choir in a church, took charge of the altar boys, and taught CCD classes (personal communication, November, 2011).

Sr. Jane was sent to Michigan to get her graduate degree in library science. Her first degree was in Social Work from the University of Pittsburgh.

As a “junior,” Sr. Jane immersed herself in her religious vocation by working in the library and teaching. She taught English Composition at the college and did Freshmen Seminar. In addition, she taught a class in Library Science...” anything the students needed, I did” (personal communication,

November, 2011). This young nun had a passion for getting to know the students and what they wanted.

After teaching for a few years, Sr. Jane suggested a Fine Arts program for the fall and spring terms. She had artists come into classes to sing and dance and showed foreign films in Rosemary Heil Theater to her students. Another class, assigned to her by Sr. Thomas Aquinas, was Children’s Literature. Sr. Jane had 70 students in one class! They each had to write 100 poems! Students were taught everything from the “Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe” to Sr. Jane’s favorite, “The Iliad,” for which lectures centered on the “tender moments” of the story. Her love for Homer’s work extended to television as well. In 1953, she conducted an eight-session program on “The Iliad” with WQED public television in Pittsburgh (personal communication, November, 2011). Sr. Jane’s modus operandi in her classes was for her students to find “joy in learning” (personal communication, November, 2011).

Sr. Jane loved literature so much that she led an effort to establish the Regina Medal for the Catholic Library Association. The medal was dedicated to the Virgin Mary and was designed by Sr. Rita Owen, and Art Professor at Mt. Mercy College. The first award for children’s literature was given in 1959 (personal communication, November, 2011) to writer Eleanor Farjeon. The Regina Medal threw Sr. Jane into the public domain; she began to form her public persona. She gave the Catholic Library Association an identity and publicized that identity with an award. “[In other words] she gave the Association a signature.” (personal communication, December, 2011). As Sr. Jane gave the Association an identity, she would do the same for her beloved college in years to come.

Foreign travel and study abroad were things she encouraged.

It was evident that Jane Scully’s mission to “throw her life away” for God in service to others carried through in everything she did: she displayed an apparent—and deepening—love for books, learning, people, the Sisters of Mercy, God, the liberal arts, and the college.

#### Mt. Mercy Enrollment:

1950: 982 students  
 1951: 1141 students  
 1952: 1158 students  
 1953: 1203 students  
 1954: 813 students  
 1955: 1600 students  
 1956: 1014 students  
 1957: 1044 students  
 1958: 1285 students  
 1959: 1259 students

#### A Snapshot in Time: 1950s

Dictatorships flooding many Latin American countries  
 1950-3: Korean War  
 1953: Stalin dies and Khrushchev takes power  
 1957: Russians launch Sputnik  
 1958: Charles de Gaulle rules France as President



## CHAPTER 5: THE 1960s

In the 1960s United States, Catholic Americanization reached its pinnacle with the election of President John F. Kennedy. Pope John XXIII, an immensely popular pope, called an ecumenical council, Vatican II, together in the hopes that the Church would not isolate itself from modern culture, but rather share “responsibility for the fate of the human family” (O’Brien, 1994, p. 21). Even non-Catholics were invited to attend this council. The Pope wished to center the Church into the “midst of human history”; everyone was a member of the “people of God” (p. 21). The Second Vatican Council (p. 48) caused more universities to either establish or expand their theology programs; some referred to theology courses as “Religious Studies” so that the public would not consider these equal to seminary courses.

Vatican II encouraged institutions to self-examine and self-improve (O’Brien, 1994, p. 49) as well as open up dialogue with non-Christians. “The Pastoral Constitution on the Church and Modern World” was published in 1965 (p. 49), and it encouraged the Church to be at the center of human culture. This became the “magna carta” of higher education in the United States, for curricular reform. The study of human sciences, respect for the secular, openness to the non-Catholic, and emphasis on service to society became the foundation for academic “excellence.”

In 1967, at Land O’Lakes, Wisconsin, church leaders gathered to redefine Catholic universities (O’Brien, 1994, p. 49). The outcome encouraged theological scholars who were experts in all branches of theology, so that they could address the religious heritage of the world through sciences, discussion, and multiple methodologies. The presence of non-Catholic was necessary to bring “universality” to a Catholic university.

However, this outcome also created fallout: English replaced Latin in the mass, hundreds of Catholic elementary and secondary schools closed, and many priests and nuns left their vocations. There was also a sharp decline in Catholic school attendance and an increasingly heated debate over birth control. People felt if they did not see the priests and sisters on college campuses that the identity of the Catholic institution was in question (O’Brien, 1994, p. 50).

By the end of the 1960s, institutional autonomy and presidential authority were interconnected. This was seen as a sign of administrative strength as well as academic excellence (O’Brien, 1994, p. 51). In administration, colleges had a larger share of professional faculty and staff, increasing emphasis on policies and procedures and more took the form of bureaucracies (p. 51).

Concurrently, it was during this decade that presidents of Catholic institutions resented interference from their own religious superiors (O’Brien, 1994, p. 51). State governments, concerned about presidents filling dual roles, began putting pressure on Catholic institutions to separate from religious structures in order to receive federal funding (p. 52). Vatican II was not opposed to this, since it emphasized the inclusion of human sciences in the curriculum as well as the expertise of professional lay faculty. So, Vatican II, while helping to modernize the Catholic academic arena, also helped to create an identity and philosophical crisis (p. 56) along with inclusion of professional faculty and administration.



Many Catholic institutions (led by Notre Dame University) in the late 1960s actually filed for separate incorporation from their religious order so that they could function independently. New boards of trustees were established, and they quickly took control from the founding religious order (O'Brien, 1994, p. 52).

As a result, professional lay persons now dominated the boards of the majority of Catholic colleges (O'Brien, 1994, p. 52). O'Brien refers to this as a "revolution whose full impact is still to be felt" (p. 52). In other words, he felt we gave our Catholic institutions away.

In 1964, conflicts about academic freedom and tenure rippled through three Catholic institutions: Catholic University, St. John's College, and the University of Dayton. Of importance was the thought that academic excellence meant having a license to basically teach anything. Catholic leaders responded that Catholic doctrine had to be the center of a Catholic cultural environment on campuses (O'Brien, 1994, p. 53).

In 1968, a few other things happened that impacted Catholic higher education: New York colleges took moves to distance themselves from the Church in order to continue receiving state aid, national officials urged Catholic colleges to adopt the American Association of University Professors 1940 statement on academic freedom AND make it an added element to any faculty handbook, and, in 1969, the courts rejected "en loco parentis," paving the way for student rights on campuses (O'Brien, 1994, p. 55). From 1969 to 1972, there was a financial crisis on Catholic college campuses (p. 59).

In 1963, the Higher Education Facilities Act was passed, allowing grants to religious institutions if the institution could prove that no money was used for religious indoctrination (O'Brien, 1994, p. 55). Many at this time felt the increasing numbers of professional lay faculty had helped to do away with Catholic identity (p. 56). Religious orders during the 1960s distanced themselves from the local dioceses because of concern of control (p. 57). We also need to keep in mind that the sexual revolution and the civil rights movement were occurring at the same time in the United States, along with growing frustration over the United States war with Vietnam.

As O'Brien (1994) summarizes the decade of the 1960s, we see a strong link between the Catholic faith and higher education (p. 19):

The taken-for-granted blend of Catholic and American righteousness, the unexamined intimacy of their relationship inside us, once shaped our church and its universities. But a new day arrived so suddenly that it shattered lives...students demanded that the university recover its critical distance from the nation by opposing the Vietnam War; as at almost every university, these demands led to conflict with their administration, as well as with the government. When the earthquakes of the 1960's were over, the mission and identity of Catholic colleges and universities, once so obvious and compelling, was hard to find. Having come from the heart of the American church, their fate had become bound up with a community undergoing historic transformation. When history is no longer moving in the right direction – in our direction – faith and work are disconnected and everything looks different.

Historically, the decades of the 1960s and 1970s were spirited with movements endorsing change. Within the Roman Catholic Church, Vatican II's *aggiornamento* (meaning open-mindedness or need for change) had emphasized five major ideals: value for non-Christians, dialogue, theological self-understanding, expertise of lay people, and freedom of action and thought (Nicola, 1996). Within the United States, societal change encompassed the civil rights movement, demands for women's rights, more liberal sexual mores, and increasing demand for coeducational, rather than separate gender, institutions of higher education. Catholic colleges that wished to avoid becoming coeducational established cooperative agreements for classes between all-male and all-female institutions (Nicola, 1996).

The decade of the 1960s likewise brought increasing pressure from MSCHE to separate the college President from President of the Order of the Sisters of Mercy (Nicola, 1996). The dual role was not working well because of increasing administrative demands. Sr. Muriel Gallaher, President from 1960-1963, would be the last President of Mount Mercy to serve in both capacities. Interestingly enough, in 1962, it was President Muriel Gallaher, RSM, who told Sr. Jane she needed to leave her library position because the Board wanted her to become Director of Development. So, one of Sr. Jane's primary duties in the 1960s and 1970s, from the time she raised funds for Grace Library, was development.

Educational institutions were also being bombarded with the need for specialization and career development, moving ever more into the "market value" of a person's major and the "end job" resulting from years of intense study. At Mount Mercy, this need caused an intensive self-study, the Mellon Study, in an effort to determine how to balance the liberal arts with professional majors. Interestingly, since business schools and secretarial schools were developing as post-secondary options, Mount Mercy eliminated secretarial science and home economics majors in 1961 (Nicola, 1996). Sr. Thomas Aquinas was elected President in 1963, engaging the entire community in this self-study. Sr. M. Patrick McClain served as Dean (the title changed to Academic Vice President in 1965) from 1963 to 1974.

In response to some of these increasing pressures for change, Sr. M. Thomas Aquinas (a.k.a., Elizabeth Carroll) in 1965 reported to the Board of Trustees of Mount Mercy that the college would use liberal arts approaches to learning. She instituted a women's seminar series, encouraged the college to begin to think of ways to recognize and serve the needs of the black community in the neighboring Hill District, and established a cooperative inter-faith project (Nicola, 1996). In 1968-9, the first Black Studies course was offered at Mount Mercy, and from 1963 to 1974, the college minority student population increased from 10-12 percent (Nicola, 1996).

Sr. Jane began assisting Sr. Thomas Aquinas, who was both President and Mother Superior. MSCHE said that one person serving dual roles, especially with a growing college, would not suffice and had to be addressed. As a result, Sr. Jane was given more responsibilities for managing the college (personal communication, December, 2011).

Sr. Jane summarized Sr. Aquinas' contributions as the following: curriculum examination (Mellon Study) and expansion of study of Theology; encouragement of all Mercy Sisters to obtain a Ph.D.; a brilliant interpreter of Vatican II; a strong defensiveness of her students; and a genuine concern for

the Pittsburgh Mercy Order (personal communication, January, 2012).

Sr. Jane remembers feeling “overwhelmed” for two weeks after she became President (personal communication, January, 2012). She attempted to attend each and every meeting on campus. Someone reminded her of Catherine McAuley and told her to “take every day as it comes,” similar to the concept of the Sisters always being ready with their trunks. The Sisters of Mercy were always ready to go where they were needed on a moment’s notice.

In retrospect, Sr. Jane Scully’s talents, abilities, knowledge, and skills were being noticed. Both the college and the public began to appreciate and *crave* what this incredible woman had to offer. “An authority on library service to children, Sr. Jane was invited to the White House Conference on Children and Youth in 1960 and 1962” (Head of..., n.d.). In 1963 she was named to membership in the Society for Research in Child Development. During the early 1960s Sr. Scully served in four other capacities: secretary of the cooperative committee of Administrative and Business Officers (this included University of Pittsburgh, Chatham College, Duquesne University, Carnegie Institute of Technology, Mellon Institute, and Mt. Mercy), secretary of the Academic Librarians Committee on Cooperative Projects, curator of the Mt. Mercy Irish Collection, and a member of the Gaelic Arts Society (Area Resident..., 1965).

She would later state that her career had been “divided into four phases: the first ten years (1940–1950) were spent teaching in parochial schools, from elementary to secondary level, and she stated she was “learning how to communicate” back then. From 1950 to 1960, she was a “salesman, who was selling Carlow.” Then from 1966 to 1976, she was President, “learning about administration and management” (Jordan, 1979, p. C13).

And, as stated previously, from 1962–1965, Sr. Jane held previous positions at Mt. Mercy: Director of Development, Assistant to the President, and Vice President of Community Relations. In 1964, she received the “Distinguished Alumnae Award” from the University of Pittsburgh. From a leadership theory perspective, all these assignments led to Blackaby and Blackaby’s “convergence phase”: the nomination and election of Sr. Jane Scully (47 years old) as the sixth President, and first alumna as president, of Mt. Mercy College in 1966. She would serve in that office until 1982, the second longest tenure for a President since its founding. Under her, Dr. Thomas Hopkins would serve as Academic Vice President from 1974–1983 (Dr. Hopkins had been Dean of the Faculty in 1964), and Sr. Elizabeth McMillan served as Dean of the College (1974–1983).

When Sr. Elizabeth Carroll (Sr. Thomas Aquinas) decided to resign in 1965 as President and yet remain Mother Superior of the Mercy Order, she recommended Sr. Jane to the college Board of Trustees for the Presidency (personal communication– Scully, January, 2012).

At Sr. Jane’s inauguration ceremony, Dr. Edward Eddy, President of Chatham College in Pittsburgh, stated that Sr. Scully was “a competent, honest female with a sense of humor” (Rosensweet, 1967). Interestingly enough, Sanders (2007) finds that humor is a necessary quality for any leader because leaders use a sense of humor to displace tension (p. 65). Sr. Jane’s humor and optimism would remain with her always and serve to endear her to many people through the years.

In her acceptance speech, Sr. Jane defined education and learning in ways that only a true servant leader could (Rosensweet, 1967; Librarian becomes..., 1967): human and on human terms, secret, loving, open, contemplative, humble...that man must speak but that man needs another's reverence in order to reveal himself...that worthy education should be desperately concerned with what the Greeks called 'knowing yourself'...when man speaks to a man with respect for his thoughts and concern for him as an individual, that is the aristocracy of spirit.

Moreover, she felt students must be willing to "share themselves" with fellow students and professors so everyone might learn; reverence for the learning process and for each other would lead to the "revelation of self" (Mt. Mercy President..., 1967).

No matter the role she had, Sr. Jane felt Carlow needed to show a "spirit of community;" students were always Jane's primary concern (personal communication, February, 2012).

It wasn't long after Sr. Jane was installed as President of Mt. Mercy that she quickly found her "voice" to speak as the key representative of the college. An article in the Pittsburgh Press (Eskey, 1967, p. 1), published less than a year after her inauguration, captures her personality, her leadership capabilities, and her vision for the college:

Sister Camillus [Scully] is a plain-talking iconoclast who loves books, hates conformity, prefers courage to caution, and encourages students to think for themselves." "Boy, this place is jumping right now" she states. Here's why: a committee of professors will report on a plan to completely revise the curriculum, perhaps offering a bachelor's degree after three years of liberal arts...also under discussion is a new and more distinctive name for the college... Mt. Mercy may become the first Catholic college in the country to accept a student bill of rights...giving students power to govern their own behavior. Long range plans call for a 25-member board of trustees, only 8 of them nuns. As many as 10-20 bright girls a year may be enrolled as freshmen at Mt. Mercy after completing their junior year of high school. For the first time in its history, Mt. Mercy may ask the Pittsburgh community for major financial support, as much as 21 million dollars for its faculty...One of her hopes is that colleges in Pittsburgh may someday combine instead of competing with duplicate programs...To her, Mt. Mercy is a place where young people learn to think, to be intelligent critics of society. In her youth she wanted to be a writer, starting first as a social worker 'to get out and see people.' Instead she became a nun, teacher, a librarian...and now a college president.

Her own watchful campus community, in particular the student body, zeroed in on the essence of their new President. The student newspaper, called *The Harbinger*, reported in an article entitled, "The College, the President, and the Ideal" (1967, p. 3) that:

Lately everything seems so new...free university classes, a three year program, a Bill of Rights,...our new president, the redhead, a dynamic administrator with plans and facets yet to unfold...Now there is Dougherty Hall beside Frances Warde, and a library to be planted on the hill...Mt. Mercy is blooming, blooming, alive...evidence of what a college can do when it has an ideal and works towards it.

These quotations refer to several significant events that Sr. Jane spearheaded: the building of Grace Library, of which she was the principle fundraiser; free university classes in which anyone on campus was free to “teach”; establishment of one of the first student Bill of Rights on a catholic college campus; a new dormitory; curriculum revision; cooperative programs with neighboring universities; expansion of the Board of Trustees to include corporate and non-profit expertise; capital campaign development; and consideration of new degree options. In fact, Sr. Scully is credited with being the “unofficial architect” of the \$3.3 million library built in what was considered the “heart” of the college campus (*She Had Designs...*, 1969). How interesting that the library seat on campus was described as the “heart” of the college when libraries had in fact captured Sr. Jane’s very heart as a child. Momentum was growing—all of these under way in less than a year after her appointment!

Yet, all these personal accomplishments pale in comparison to others that came in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. Sr. Jane Scully would not only continue the momentum on campus but move further into public service. The convergence stage of servant leadership was in full swing and, in 1969, the pinnacle manifested itself in a dual name change. Two of the most symbolic occurrences during Sr. Jane’s 16-year tenure as President were her own name change from Sr. Mary Camillus Scully to simply, Sr. Jane Scully (as a result of Vatican II reforms), and Mt. Mercy College becoming known as Carlow College (personal communication, December, 2011).

In 1969, Mt. Mercy had over 100 faculty, 900 students, and 11 permanent buildings. Their intensive self-study, the Mellon Study, had already led to several educational reforms: all classes were styled as seminars; the college expanded research opportunities as well as field placement assignments; pass-fail options were now available for some classes, and only three basic courses were mandatory for all students (*She Had Designs...*, 1969). Yet, for years, Mt. Mercy had been confused with other Mercy colleges as well as Mercy hospitals. Barnard (1969, p. 1) quoted Sr. Jane on the rationale behind the name change:

The move for a name change grew out of continued confusion of identities with other institutions bearing similar names ... but it was only after years of discussion and even more years of consternation that the decision was made...the college is constantly being confused with ...other institutions associated with the Sisters of Mercy. There also are a great many other colleges, universities, hospitals and other church-related institutions with Mount in their names, adding to the confusion. Sister Jane is no newcomer to the idea of a name change. A year ago she was known as Sister M. Camillus Scully.” “At first there will be a recognition gap...but a college needs to have an identity of its own, and that’s what Carlow College will be.

*Pittsburgh Catholic* (1969) reported the official first graduate of Carlow College as Peggy Cerutti Ayraud, an English major. There had been much confusion with Mt. Mercy since there were other Mercy colleges as well as schools and hospitals by the same name. “Carlow” was researched because of the roots of the Mercy Order founder as well as its uniqueness amongst college names across the country.



Mt. Mercy Enrollment:

1960: 1238 students  
 1961: 1364 students  
 1962: 1482 students  
 1963: 1572 students  
 1964: 1412 students  
 1965: 1436 students  
 1966: 1524 students  
 1967: 1492 students  
 1968: 1194 students  
 1969: 1105 students

A Snapshot in Time: 1960s

1961: Bay of Pigs invasion unsuccessful in Cuba  
 1961: Berlin Wall erected to keep East Germans from fleeing to west  
 1963: President John F. Kennedy assassinated in Dallas, TX  
 1963: Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* published  
 1964: Khrushchev, Breshnev succeeds in Russia  
 1964: US Civil Rights Act passed, banning discrimination  
 1965: Vietnam War begins  
 1967: Six Day War between Israel and nearby Arab states  
 1968: Student riots in Paris against the government  
 1968: Martin Luther King & Robert Kennedy assassinations  
 1969: First man on the moon

**CHAPTER 6: THE 1970s**

Catholics became divided and embraced their Americanism more than their faith. The Vatican supported “conscious objection” (O’Brien, 1994, p. 21) and attempted to guide Catholics as they made up their own minds on the Vietnam War and birth control. Bishops in the United States began to find a voice with the Vatican. They became more independent in thought and action. The roles of women in the Church were hotly debated, and many women became alienated from the Church because of it.

The results of all this (according to Greeley, cited in O’Brien, p. 23): “ineffective, confused and conflicted...church leaders; poor religious education; disheartened priests; unenlightened preaching; angry women; a vigorously independent laity; a moribund sexual ethic; economic success... shortages of priests; ...a new religious sensibility among the youth...” Greeley called this “do-it-yourself Catholicism” (p. 24). Younger people found little conflict with the issue of birth control; usually they were in favor of individual choice, reflective of the individualism of American culture at large.

In 1970, there were 430,000 students in Catholic universities (O’Brien, 1994, p. 53). In 1972, the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education and the International Federation of Catholic Universities supported the feelings that bishops had no right to “intervene in university affairs” (p. 58) and, in 1975, a group of 18 theologians (Catholic and Protestant) signed the “Hartford Affirmations” which basically stated that Christians had to immerse themselves in the world to combat injustice, poverty, and prejudice (p. 29). Avery Dulles, the American theologian who headed this effort, began to also criticize Catholic universities as becoming more secular and thus, surrendering to the temptations of the world.



In 1974, the Vatican expressed concern that religious property was being transferred to lay persons (i.e. their Boards of Trustees) without the consent required by canon law, causing questions about the “Catholic” identity of those institutions (O’Brien, 1994, p. 60). As a result, in 1976 and again in 1979, the Vatican began working on a constitution requiring that any institution teaching Catholic theology be required to fulfill a “canonical mission” (p. 61).

After the Mellon Study (the college’s self-study of the 1960s), Sr. Scully proposed that the curriculum at Carlow be divided into four parts, one of which was the liberal arts. She felt the liberal arts should be the “guts” of the college (personal communication, March 2011).

According to Sr. Elizabeth McMillan, Academic Dean under Sr. Jane, (personal communication, March 2011), much was done in the curriculum in the 1970s: women studies was added, business management was offered as a major (Dr. Emerson N. Milligram developed the major), and weekend college began for working women. Sr. McMillan began to get different courses together, such as Corporate Social Responsibility. In fact, Charley Parry, Vice President of Alcoa, joined the first class. Sr. McMillan likewise led efforts to hire new faculty and gave formal faculty development responsibilities to Dr. Thomas Hopkins, who held the position of Dean of the Faculty.

Carlow’s Office of Continuing Education was established in 1971 in an effort to afford working women a chance to develop professionally by earning a bachelor’s degree. This was a forerunner to Weekend College, established in 1978, which also allowed bachelor’s degree completion on a part-time basis (Nicola, 1996). Childcare was provided for women attending weekend college in the late 1970s (personal communication, March 2011).

Other 1970s program changes continued to address societal and Roman Catholic calls for change. In the mid-1970s, a Learning Center was established on campus to address returning student needs in reading, writing and math. Many students lacked sufficient skills in these areas. Formally, the college added courses or majors in the following: Art Therapy, Black Studies, Business Management, Environmental Studies, Art, Music, Speech Communication, and Peace Studies. And, in 1975, the first college mission statement was written, emphasizing the value of the female person, the need for lifelong learning, and the feminist perspective and a woman’s role in relation to the world around her (Nicola, 1996). A Women’s Studies program was established in 1978, and all students at Carlow were required to take a women’s studies course as part of their core requirements for graduation.

Around this same time, Sr. Jane Scully encouraged the establishment of both the Faculty Senate and the Faculty Assembly. The Faculty Senate was an elected body of faculty—the legislative arm; the Faculty Assembly was the social arm of the faculty. The faculty determined they would use the American Association of University Professors as the foundation for their bylaws as well as for issues of shared governance. Likewise, a Staff Assembly was created to act as the voice of the staff on campus (personal communication, January, 2012). These seemed excellent vehicles to empower each part of the campus community and provide a shared governance environment.

In 1970, Sr. Jane Scully made her first “public appearance” as a leader in Pittsburgh. She was asked to serve on the Port Authority Transit Board (PAT) by then mayor, Peter Flaherty (who happened to be not only the brother of psychology Professor, Sr. Rita Flaherty, but an alumna of Mount Mercy

College as well). When she returned to Carlow after her first meeting, an announcement was on television of her appointment to the PAT Board (personal communication – Scully, February, 2012).

Thus, the 1970s saw Sr. Jane riding a wave of popularity and personal accomplishment. She was widely recognized in many circles: higher education, library associations, by city and state officials, in corporate America. In this ten year period alone, she received fifteen noteworthy awards or recognitions (Sisters of Mercy, 2011; personal communication, Sr. Jane Scully)—a steady stream of accolades: Board Member, Port Authority Transit; speaker, National Commission on Religion in Higher Education; “Man of the Year in Education”, Pittsburgh Jaycees; Presidential appointment—National Commission for the Financing of Post-Secondary Education; “Distinguished Alumnae, University of Pittsburgh Library School; Elected Board Member, Gulf Oil Corporation; Member, Duquesne Club; “Woman of the Year”, Ladies Home Journal; “Distinguished Daughter of Pennsylvania”; Chair, Economic Development Committee of the City of Pittsburgh. Of these, three were groundbreaking for women, let alone a woman religious: “Man of the Year in Education (previously all awardees were male); member, Duquesne Club (an all-male Pittsburgh professional Club); and Board Member, Gulf Oil (Sr. Jane was the first woman religious to be on an industry Board of Directors and one of a few women worldwide to hold such a post).

In many ways, the 1970s was her era for taking a stand on two issues: women’s equality in the professions and on corporate social responsibility. After being thrown into the limelight as the first woman to be elected to a major corporate Board of Directors (Gulf Oil), Sr. Scully used that position to advocate both issues.

Gulf Oil Corporation also had given Carlow College a gift of \$50,000 before Sr. Jane came on their Board (personal communication, October, 2011).

Gulf Oil spokesperson, Paul Sheldon, was interviewed by the *New York Post* (Quindlen, 1978) in April, 1978. He stated Sr. Jane was chosen because of her “distinguished career” in Pittsburgh and her solid reputation. Sr. Jane replied that her appointment was not necessarily a tribute to Gulf Oil or to her as an individual, but “I think it’s a tribute to Carlow. It’s a small catholic women’s college that produced the first woman to sit on the board of a major oil company. I want people to remember that.” (p. 21). Butler (1977), in an article for the Pittsburgh Press, quoted Sr. Jane as accepting the position on Gulf’s board because she felt it “was important for the perspective of a private citizen to be seen and heard at the corporate level” (pp. 1-7). And Redbook (1975) mentions, “Sister Jane is vitally interested in the role of women in today’s society...She anticipates serving on Gulf’s personnel committee working for greater opportunity for women as well as bringing to the board a fresh perspective on corporate responsibility.” She likewise is quoted as saying her opportunity to serve here was a “greater chance to build the kingdom of God, greater than any other force in my life, including perhaps, the Church.” and that, as a nun, she felt it appropriate to serve in this capacity because she had “insights into religious and social concerns and their relation to public concerns” (Rust, 1978, p. 3; Colorado Women’s Bulletin, 1978). Sr. Jane owned \$2000 of Gulf Oil stock at the time and gave it to the Sisters of Mercy. Gulf paid their directors \$10,000 for their service; Sr. Jane turned it into a scholarship fund for a young woman interested in pursuing a degree in business management (Quindlen, 1978).

Most notably, after joining the board, the directors demanded the resignation of four top Gulf executives for involvement in the President Nixon slush fund scandal. Sr. Jane was credited with the deciding vote and, in doing so, voted to demand the resignation of the very man, Bob Dorsey, (Butler, 1977; Rust, 1978) who recommended her for the board. Butler (1977) states “The action was hailed as a benchmark for corporate responsibility...” (pp. 1-7). As a matter of fact, she told the board all four had to go because “nothing would correct the situation except a change of administration” (Rust, 1978, p. 3). In addition to the forced resignations, Gulf restructured their tax organization and established a business principles committee and a human resources committee to “evaluate the ethical standing of the staff” (Rust, 1978, p. 3).

At another Board meeting in Bermuda, Sr. Scully met with Gulf Oil presidents from 70 other countries. The discussion centered on how Gulf stood financially in comparison to other corporations. Sr. Jane interrupted them by challenging them to first think about the overall state of the world and then Gulf’s part in it (Rust, 1978). She constantly encouraged Gulf—and other boards—to develop a more “cosmic view” (p. 3).

During meetings at the private Duquesne Club in downtown Pittsburgh, Sr. Jane was banned from entering the main dining room with her peers on the board. She stated, “For women to be shut out is like sending children to eat in the kitchen” (Butler, 1977, pp. 1-7).

In 1978, the Carnegie Corporation of New York awarded a \$272,000 grant to Wells College for the Public Leadership Education Network (PLEN). Sr. Jane remembers she met Ruth Mandel at a conference at Rutgers University. Sr. Jane asked her if Carlow College could be the first to join. Chatham College, Carlow’s neighboring female institution, had Alberta Arthur present at the conference. Alberta and Sr. Jane would later be the first females inducted into the private Duquesne Club in Pittsburgh (personal communication, January, 2012). PLEN exists on Carlow’s campus to this day as a vehicle for women to become involved in the political arena.

As president of a woman’s college and as one of the first women elected to a major corporate Board of Directors, Sr. Scully used her position in other ways to further the rights of women. Most times she was interviewed, she took advantage of the situation to make public statements on the role women play in our society, and, moreover, the role they should be playing. Several statements were also made about her countercultural roles. Sr. Jane was a complex woman, with many talents, one of which being her ability to bridge the gender gap through her many areas of responsibility.

Through her years of service, some of her most notable quotes pertaining to women are:

So, she challenges women to think ‘What is your identity? What are your objectives? What steps are you going to take? She goes on to state, once you know who you are, ‘there will be a deep, inner harmony. You will always be at peace with yourself. You will appreciate, and accept, and respect yourself. And then you can relate to others.’ She looks upon this as an enormous mission. As president of Carlow her ‘most urgent concern continues to be the education of women as women, and the ever increasing opportunities for their advancement as persons in society.’ She also states ‘My teachers believed in me. They were professional competent remarkable women. I decided, if ever I were to ‘throw my life away for the service

of God, it would be here.' Jane instituted programs for women in: communications, health education, and business, women's studies. (Butler, 1977, pp. 1-7)

She talks to men about being accountable. And in many ways, she is the apostle for the modern woman, strong and determined, gentle and compassionate. Her ability to cross many barriers is indicated by her selection as 'Man of the Year' in 1972. (Colorado Women's College Bulletin, 1978)

Women interested in politics start out with too many assumptions against them, said Sr. Jane. Carlow and 4 other women's colleges across the country received a \$272,000 grant from Carnegie Corp. of NY to set up Public Leadership Education Network (PLEN) in an effort to increase the number of women in public office.

Sr. Jane in the interview noted Pittsburgh's economy is growing in new areas: public relations, communications, education and health. Up to this time, Pittsburgh was known for steel making, mining and other "male dominated industries". Since the new areas primarily attract women, Sr. Jane sees a need for increased participation in politics. (*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 1978, p. 3)

In 1945, 4 percent of working women were managers, in 1976, the number was only 5.5 percent. That's a scandal in a nation with such ... educated women... When was the last time you asked your wife her goals or your secretary how you could help her? Men never think of those things and they'll take it from me because I'm older, a religious, and non-threatening... Women need to create networks to support each other and form caucuses in every discipline from bartender to psychologist. A school teacher and librarian for years, Sister Scully's own success began snowballing when she wanted a new library at Carlow and the previous president told her to go get the funds as well as the plans. She raised \$3 million, but not before she realized how difficult it was 'just getting men to listen...a businesswoman has to be tuned in to what's going on 100 percent of the time and men don't have to do that' (Jordan, 1979, p. C-13).

She has served on corporate boards, governing boards for the city of Pittsburgh and is the president of a college with a \$5 million budget. These are rather unusual jobs for a woman but it is even more unusual for a nun...a petite talkative woman. A college president for 12 years, Sister Scully has urged women to 'fulfill their own destiny'. Through all her careers, she has kept growing in a way which was not possible outside the religious community. 'Women expect to be asked to do things, and then they'll say maybe I can and maybe I can't. In the religious community, they say you do, you do it. It's a remarkable kind of confidence building.' Urging women to become confident and make the most of their lives has become her goal. She believes women reaching an equal status in the Roman Catholic Church is inevitable (Mecoy, 1979).

<p><u>Carlow College Enrollment:</u></p> <p>1970: 1083 students  1971: 1009 students  1972: 1045 students  1973: 1065 students  1974: 1010 students  1975: 943 students  1976: 988 students  1977: 1100 students  1978: 1224 students  1979: 921 students</p>	<p><u>A Snapshot in Time: 1970s</u></p> <p>1970: Kent State shooting</p> <p>1970: First female jockey in Kentucky Derby</p> <p>1970: 18 year olds given right to vote in elections</p> <p>1972: Watergate break in</p> <p>1974: President Nixon resigns</p> <p>1974: Girls allowed in Little League Baseball</p> <p>1975: First US born Catholic saint, Elizabeth Seton</p> <p>1975: Microsoft founded</p> <p>1976: First artificial gene created</p> <p>1976: West Point admits women for first time</p> <p>1977: First Black Miss Universe crowned</p> <p>1977: First women priest ordained in Episcopal church</p> <p>1977: Carter halts development of B-1 bomber</p> <p>1977: Anwar al-Sadat visits Israel</p> <p>1978: First test tube baby –in vitro fertilization</p> <p>1978: Jonestown massacre</p> <p>1979: Margaret Thatcher becomes England’s PM</p> <p>1979: Diplomatic ties to China formalized</p> <p>1979: Three Mile Island partial meltdown</p> <p>1979: Mother Theresa wins Nobel Peace Prize</p>
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## CHAPTER 7: THE 1980s

The decade of the 1980s ushered in radical theologians (O’Brien, 1994, p. 30) who felt that the Church has been “compromised” by its “immersion” in the world. The focus of Catholics was no longer on answering the call of Jesus but instead was on becoming immersed in “an increasingly secularized society” (p. 30). Catholic universities seemed no longer sure of their identities...they were also victims of “secularization” (p. 30). They had “helped make Catholics into Americans and now the call was for them to help the church recall those same Americans to Catholicism.” (p. 31).

In 1983, in Bernardin’s “The Challenge of Peace”, questions were posed about how the Church could still be the Church and yet become a partner in the world for justice and peace (O’Brien, 1994, p. 33). Churches and universities were seen as jointly responsible for the moral well-being of society with Catholic higher education as the “meeting ground” for faith and culture (p. 34).

In 1985, the Vatican published a draft constitution involving academic freedom in theology that caused renewed debate (O’Brien, 1994, p. 62). Part of the document mentions that if an institution wanted to be autonomous then it could not be considered part of the Church. Moreover, in 1986, the Vatican reaffirmed this need for Catholic higher education to be affiliates with the Church hierarchy (p. 59).

In general terms, the 1980s brought increasing societal concern for issues relating to social responsibility and ethics, especially on the part of major corporations, such as Gulf Oil. The women’s equality movement, now in full swing, demanded investigations into equal pay and



innovative ways to address child care responsibilities while pursuing professional career options. In an effort to assist women, Carlow established Tuesday College in 1982—a creative effort allowing women to attend college classes for one day per week while providing child care on campus and Hill College in 1983—an effort to afford African American women in the Hill District the opportunity to attend college classes in a satellite location close to home. Increasingly, Carlow had to deal with greater numbers of non-traditional aged students during this time. New majors were also added in chemistry, communication arts, sociology and anthropology, theology and ministry, computer science, accounting, journalism and writing, and special education. Certificate programs were offered in medical technology, school nursing, and perfusion technology. Courses were added in the areas of arts management, business, society, and ethics, and liturgical music ministry. Later, graduate programs strengthened Carlow’s offerings: Early Childhood, Montessori certification, Educational Leadership, and Elementary and Secondary Principal (Nicola, 1996).

Changes in administration were on the horizon soon after. Sr. Mary Louise Fennell was elected President of Carlow College in 1982, the first President from outside the Pittsburgh Mercy community. She was in office from 1982-1988. Sr. Grace Ann Geibel served in the capacity of Academic Vice President from 1983-1988, under Sr. Fennell. Later, in 1988, Sr. Grace Ann would become the eighth President of the college and the second longest serving. Her tenure lasted seventeen years, one year shy that of Mother Irenaeus Dougherty. 1988 likewise saw the establishment of the first Provost, Dr. Patricia O’Donoghue, who served until 1996.

When Sr. Grace Ann Geibel was elected President in 1988, Sr. Jane gave her advice. She told her that to be a good president, you must: be trustworthy, be easy to approach, be a continual student of management and leadership principles, be interested in your own staff and faculty, and be interested in fundraising (personal communication, January, 2012).

After Sr. Jane resigned as President, she served on the Board of Directors of Mercy Hospital.

On a personal level, for Sr. Jane Scully, awards and recognitions continued into the 1980s, even after she resigned as President in 1982. Her efforts for women’s education, as evidenced by the curricular developments mentioned, afforded her a reputation and the bestowing of the following four honorary doctorate degrees: Doctor of Humane Letters from Marymount Manhattan; Doctor of Divinity from Lafayette College; Doctorate of Humane Letters from Susquehanna University; and Doctor of Letters from College of the Sacred Heart. St. Vincent College in Latrobe, PA invited Sr. Jane to receive an honorary doctorate; unfortunately, she was unable to attend that ceremony because of another obligation, so the award was never conferred (personal communication, Sr. Jane Scully).

She had already been an invited guest to the Jerusalem Seminar, personally meeting and addressing Menachem Begin of Israel; she was asked to attend and speak at Notre Dame University’s Religious Leaders Program; she was named “Distinguished American Woman” of 1982; she received the “Touch of Mercy Award” from Mercy Hospital; she was named Vice President for Mission Effectiveness at Pittsburgh Mercy Health Corporation; named to the Board of Directors, Mercy Hospital Foundation; was Senior Advisor for Development at Holy Cross Hospital; she gave the opening invocation at the Pirates and Expos World Championship game; she received the George



Washington Carver Award; she received the President's Award from the Pittsburgh Jaycees; received the Golden Medallion Award from the University of Pittsburgh; and she received the Knights of Columbus Award for Service in Industry; and received the Brotherhood Award at the National Conference on Christians and Jews (personal communication, Sr. Jane Scully; Sisters of Mercy, 2011).

Some notable quotes from Sr. Jane during this time period include the following:

She would like to see more women in decision making roles in Pittsburgh (*Pittsburgher Magazine*, 1980, p. 80).

The broader the board, the better the board, states Sr. Jane... 'The experience of blacks and women should bring another dimension to the thinking and doing of boards. Women and blacks have struggled for their place in society and not to have them reflected at the board level – a decision-making level – is a dereliction of duty' (Lin, 1983, pp. 1, 11).

She says she has dedicated herself to women's education and women's rights but she doesn't call herself a feminist. One theme that has run through all her roles is the education of women. 'People have come up to me, thanked me for what I've done for women in this city, and that surprises me because in every instance I was just doing what was there to be done. It didn't seem like anything extraordinary' (Hamel, 1988).

#### Carlow Enrollment:

1980: 959 students  
 1981: 977 students  
 1982: 1013 students  
 1983: 1085 students  
 1984: 1248 students  
 1985: 1246 students  
 1986: 1174 students  
 1987: unavailable  
 1988: 962 students  
 1989: unavailable

#### A Snapshot in Time: 1980s

1981: First launch of space shuttle, Columbia

1981: Pope John Paul II

1981: Sandra Day O'Connor first Supreme Court Justice

1982: Tylenol scare

1982: Mexico economy collapses

1982: Breakup of AT&T

1982: Equal Rights Amendment dies in Congress, originally written in 1923

1980: AIDS identified

1983: First woman, Sally Ride, into space

1989: Berlin Wall torn down

1986: Challenger explodes

1986: Chernobyl nuclear accident in Russia

1986: Iran Contra Scandal

1986: America celebrates Martin Luther King Day for first time

1987: Black Monday, US stocks dip 22% on Oct. 19

1987: world population reaches 5 billion

## CHAPTER 8: THE 1990s

Pope John Paul II, in 1990, wrote *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, long considered a constitution for Catholic higher education (O'Brien, 1994, p. 63). Catholic colleges were put as central to accomplishing the mission of the Church, and Catholic doctrine was key to help shape cultural and spiritual struggles in the modern world (p. 64). In addition, every ten years, Catholic institutions were to conduct internal reviews of their programs and research to ensure that these aligned with the ideals of *Ex Corde* (p. 66). Moreover, professors of theology were to be given a mandate from the bishop or his delegate asserting their suitability to teach that subject (p. 66).

A survey in 1992 conducted by Michael Hunt showed 30% of incoming freshmen were Catholic, 84% had been to church within the past year, 66% favored legalized abortion under certain circumstances, and 33% identified themselves as “born again” (O'Brien, 1994, p. 24). Religious teachers adapted to this generation by providing moral guidelines for choosing behaviors versus imposing controls and voicing condemning judgments. Catholic universities, in their quest to comply with *Ex Corde*, seemed to move from instituting serious engagement with Catholic doctrine to instead increasing work in service and campus ministry to display their Catholic identities (O'Brien, 1994, p. 68).

So, Catholic identity and survival remain in question. Catholic schools (unlike their secular counterparts who have hefty endowments) remain heavily dependent on tuition and fees with government assistance representing about 12% of total income (O'Brien, 1994, p.71).

The decade of the 1990s showed rather disparate and interesting changes in the academic seat of the college. Three served in the position of Academic Vice President: Dr. Robert Wildblood (1990-1991); Sr. Jane Gerety (1991-1992); Sr. Marie Immaculee Dana (1992-2000). Years later, Dr. Gary Smith (2000-2009) would serve a dual role of Academic Vice President and Provost, and Dr. Margaret McLaughlin would follow in the same capacity in 2009. Carlow University's first lay President, Dr. Mary Hines, would be elected in 2005.

Sr. Jane Scully resigned in 1982, after sixteen years as President. Even though her official capacity as president had ended, she was so widely known and respected that honors and recognition continued well into the 1990s and 2000s. Near the end of her tenure, “The News”, in 1979, summarized her contributions:

Sister Jane Scully, a well-known public figure in the city of Pittsburgh, has held many important offices in her special field, education, and has earned public recognition for her 25 years of distinguished service to her native city, Pittsburgh, and to the Commonwealth, and to society at large.

In total, eight other recognitions were bestowed upon this holy servant: Carlow “Women of Spirit” award (1995); consultant, Library Development, Sisters of Mercy convent (1996); President Emeritus, Carlow (1997); Trustee, Carlow (1998); Board, Miryam's (1998); “Manifesting the Kingdom” award (1999); 100 of Most Influential Women of Pittsburgh (2001); Honorary Doctorate of Humanities, Carlow (2004); and Trustee Emeritus, Carlow (2010). She has also been nominated

for the Carlow Laureate Award in 2012. Interestingly enough, Sr. Jane “ended” almost exactly where she began, surrounded by a beloved library. She was officially named “librarian” of the Elizabeth Carroll Library in Mt. Mercy Convent in 2009 and still helps to oversee daily operations (personal communication, Sr. Jane Scully). Her life has come full circle.

As to how she wanted to be remembered, she clearly articulated her sentiments in an article for *Pittsburgh Catholic* in 1982 (Karlinchak, p. 1). A major portion of that article is reproduced here so that we can capture Jane’s honest reflections and thoughts about the future:

As to how she wants to be remembered: “I think I want to be remembered as an alumna who had the opportunities for leadership and took them.”

She says the first major decision she made was to change the college name. “It was important that we have a distinctive, unique name. The decision was an excellent one.”

She stated her biggest accomplishment “was the broadening of Carlow’s academic program, while expanding the college’s public image. She said the college shed its convent school image while maintaining its reputation for academic excellence.” She moved the curriculum from courses in the “helping professions” like teaching, nursing and home economics to courses in business management and computer science.”

She says she witnessed three major crises: the student militancy of the 1960’s, the financial crunch of the early 1970’s, and the enrollment decline of the late 1970’s.” In the first crisis, she let students decide what they wanted to do. In the second, the college trustees rose to the occasion. In the third, college employees came to the forefront.

She says she has changed some...from a person who enjoyed laughter and parties to someone more serious and responsible. She is more conscious of women’s causes and issues as well as their ‘enormous potential’”. She has no regrets. “I’ve made errors in judgment, but they have made me what I am. It’s God’s plan.” “I feel good about my career. It’s been 30 years of service. I just did what I was asked.”

She said her career seemed to present unexpected opportunities through requests. “I allow God, through the Holy Spirit to tell me what is next.”

She mentions in another interview that she wishes to have opportunities to teach, write and study (Carlow’s Sister Jane, n.d.), and that the school now has the highest enrollment since 1972 (1013 students). In her retirement letter, she noted to Thomas Donnelly, Chair of the Board of Trustees of Carlow (Karlinchak, 1981, pp. 1-2), that “with the college enjoying its best enrollment of the past decade, balanced operating budgets and a capital campaign successfully underway, I am certain this is the proper time to make a decision about not continuing in my present post.”

There is no doubt that this phenomenal woman was loved deeply, by her own community, by the city and the state. Several other articles were written after she announced her retirement. Local publications: *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, *The Pittsburgh Press*, and *Pittsburgh Catholic* had nothing

but accolades. Chairman Donnelly is quoted by the *Pittsburgh Press*, (Marcus, 1981, p. A8) “It will be pretty hard to think of Carlow without Sr. Jane,” and he mentioned hoping that Sr. Jane would be “available” to the college in an advisor capacity after retirement. She received a standing ovation from more than 200 on her college campus, and she even received an official Pennsylvania commendation that outlined her “distinguished career beyond the confines of Carlow.” (Marcus, 1981).

Ironically, at the very place she was not admitted at one time because she was female, the Duquesne Club was the venue for a party thrown by 255 community members in recognition of Sr. Jane’s accomplishments and contributions. She is quoted as saying, “I mean...to encourage the city to take on new and interesting ventures for women and other folks that deserve better than they are getting in the city...I hope to work with a foundation which will find my interest in women of value to them.” (Foley, n.d.).

<p><u>Carlow Enrollment:</u></p> <p>1990: 1200 students  1991: 1363 students  1992: 1668 students  1993: 1863 students  1994: 2084 students  1995: 2320 students  1996: 2339 students  1997: 2377 students  1998: 2378 students  1999: 2117 students</p>	<p><u>A Snapshot in Time: 1990s</u></p> <p>1990: First free elections in Romania in 53 years  1990: German reunification  1990: Iraq invades Kuwait  1990: Americans with Disabilities Act signed  1994: Israel and Vatican begin diplomatic relations  1994: NAFTA signed  1997: California bans Affirmative Action  1997: Dolly the sheep is cloned  1997: Madeleine Albright elected first female Secretary of State  1999: Columbine High School tragedy</p>
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## CHAPTER 9: LEADERSHIP THEORY: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Leadership is defined as one’s ability to influence others beyond their formal designation to do so. In *Contemporary Business* (Boone & Kurtz, 2010), leadership is considered an “influence of power” (p. 233). It is linked to the process of management which involves the achievement of organizational goals and objectives. Leadership theories basically are divided into three major areas: trait theory, behavioral theory, and contingency theory. The literature likewise examines charismatic, transformational, and authentic leadership and more recently, servant and spiritual leadership have been researched. A brief introduction to general leadership theory will ensue with more particular detail provided in the areas of servant and spiritual leadership. Since Sr. Jane Scully is a woman religious, it is imperative we examine leadership from a religious perspective.

### Trait Theories:

Boone and Kurtz (2010) note that other sources of a leader’s power are by virtue of that person’s position within the organization, by their expertise in past roles or in a particular area, or by virtue

of their unique personality. Robbins and Judge (2013) seem to hone in on the last issue, personality, as indicative of leadership success. According to these authors, a review of leadership literature has found the personality trait of extroversion to be “the most important trait of effective leaders... and conscientiousness and openness to experience also showed strong relationships to leadership” (p. 370). These comments relate to what is known as the “trait theory” of leadership, that people possess certain personalities that make them not only more suitable for leadership positions, but more successful as leaders as well.

Lee Iacocca (2007, pp. 6-11) feels there are several traits leaders must possess in order to be successful—leaders must be curious, creative, strong communicators. Moreover, they must have conviction, be competent, be a person of character, and be courageous. He also states that someone can’t be a leader unless they possess common sense.

The Arbinger Institute has published several books on leadership. In *Leadership and Self-Deception* (Arbinger, 2010) the authors feel that in order to be a strong leader, and to be successful, the person has to be free of self-betrayal. This means the person has to possess a strong sense of morality and must be able to govern their actions accordingly.

Briner and Pritchard (1997) state that “Leaders are always teachers.” (p. 12) and “A leader’s call for commitment, integrity, dedication, and sacrifice will never be honored unless he or she is committed, honest, dedicated, and willing to sacrifice.” (p. 13). These authors even speak of the daring qualities a leader should have (p. 221): “Real leaders often astonish and frighten as they lead. They break new ground. They take new territory... leadership... means being out front blazing new trails.” Lastly, Sanders (2007) feels two other important personality traits are the ability to listen and the ability to accept responsibility.

### Behavioral Theories:

Behavioral theories of leadership, on the contrary, believe that leaders are not born or people do not become leaders because of innate personality characteristics. Behavioral theories insist that people may be *trained* as leaders. Interestingly, the most comprehensive studies in this area came about at Ohio State in the late 1940s, the very time that Sr. Jane Scully entered the convent. These theories suggest that we may view leadership from either initiating structure or consideration (Robbins & Judge, 2013, p. 371). Another way to describe “initiating structure” is one’s inclination towards task accomplishment. This involves leadership activities such as planning, structuring, delegating, organizing, and establishing deadlines and standards that carefully need to be followed. Consideration is the extent to which leaders depend on other members of the organization and the extent to which there is mutual trust present (p. 371). Leaders who are high in consideration tend to be more concerned with relationship issues and tend to have a not only a high regard for their employees but high levels of mutual trust. Thus one is more concerned with what needs to be accomplished and the other more concerned about those accomplishing it.

Since behavioral theorists examine the interaction between leaders and followers, let’s look at some of the research commenting on the process itself. Arum and Roksa (2011, p. 127) comment on leaders in higher education, “Leaders at successful institutions ... engage other members of the

community in achieving ...vision, and they make decisions...that support the achievement of ... goals.” Iacocca (2007) comments that leaders are not individuals who take anything at face value; they ask hard questions of those around them.

### Contingency Theories:

Contingency theories are more complex in nature. They involve consideration of other factors involved that may affect the leadership component of any situation. Other factors include both leadership styles and the situation variables present. Some view both factors as “fixed” while others see the factors as “flexible”. In other words, if a situation calls for a task-oriented leader and yet the leader present is more relationship oriented, we would need to change the situation or the leader if we ascribe to the “fixed” view. If, however, we feel leadership as a more flexible quality, if a situation needs a more relationship-oriented leader, then the leader can migrate to that end accordingly, even if that is in opposition to their natural inclination. The situation, then, becomes the governing factor for leading.

Tierney (1999) feels that, within the context of higher education, leadership is a “reciprocal process” (p. 50). That leaders can’t “be” without followers, and moreover leadership is not an end result; it is a combination of the processes used, the cultural framework present, and the routes leaders take to accomplish goals (pp. 50-51).

### Charismatic Leadership:

The first person to consider a concept known as charismatic leadership was Robert House (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Having charisma, means a “certain quality of an individual personality, by virtue of which [someone] is set apart from ordinary people and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities.” (Weber, as cited in Robbins & Judge, 2013, p. 379). Iacocca (2007) concurs when he states (p. 10) that “a leader should have charisma.”

Charismatic leadership takes charisma a step further by stating followers feel that their leaders are “heroes” or have extraordinary abilities (p. 379) because they are able to articulate vision, are sensitive to other’s needs in the process, and they behave extraordinarily (p. 380). More specifically stated, charismatic leaders are said to have positive demeanors, exhibit enthusiasm, are passionate about achieving goals, and are expert communicators.

### Transformational Leaders:

Transformational leaders are likewise charismatic in nature, but their charisma extends to inspiring their followers to transcend any personal or unit goals for the attainment of organizational welfare and success (Robbins & Judge, 2013). In doing so, they show genuine concern for their followers’ interests and needs and help them problem solve in innovative ways. Followers will exert effort “above and beyond” in order to follow a transformational leader.



### Authentic Leadership:

Authentic leadership is the newest concept in leadership and thus has the least amount of research (Robbins & Judge, 2013) and integrates concepts of trust and ethics. Authentic leaders are strong individuals who are not only in touch with their values and beliefs but who are able to speak about both openly. Communication is a strong asset and frequently used to share information with others. The ethical element in authentic leadership lends a moral emphasis not seen in charismatic leadership. Charisma is a neutral quality (meaning charismatic leaders may be good or bad but the effects are the same) while authentic leaders are considered moral and trustworthy.

### Servant and Spiritual Leadership:

Another tangent of ethical leadership is examining the effect of leadership on the well-being of followers. Servant leaders go beyond their own interests and assist followers in their own growth and development (Robbins & Judge, 2013). They achieve this by persuading, empathizing, listening, and accepting stewardship (p. 387). In other words, they focus on the needs of others and exercise humility. Much is also accomplished using teams and results of servant leadership, according to research studies, are increased citizenship and higher levels of creativity (p. 387).

In *The Art of Leadership* (Manning & Curtis, 2012), Robert Greenleaf's definition of servant leadership is quoted (pp. 147-8):

...servant leadership is a calling to serve. This calling begins with the feeling deep down inside that one cares about people and wants to help others. Then conscious choice causes one to aspire to lead. The great leader is a servant first, and that is the secret of his or her greatness...Servant leaders do not view leadership as a position of power; rather they are coaches, stewards, and facilitators...Their approach is to ask, 'How can I help?'

Greenleaf (1977) states further that "...the great leader is seen as servant first, and that simple fact is the key to his greatness." (p. 7).

Blackaby and Blackaby (2011) credit George Barna with a definition of spiritual leadership that emphasizes three "C's" (p. 35): call, character, and competencies. Spiritual leadership is seen as someone who moves others to accomplish "God's agenda" (p. 37). Spiritual leaders, beyond servant leaders, acknowledge using spiritual means or a feeling of accountability to God as their prime motivation for their actions. Their accomplishments are a way to not only work on God's agenda but they are a means to cultivate the leader's relationship with God (pp. 37-42).

Seabeck (2004) speaks about servant leadership when considering the life of a Pope. "...there is the pope, endowed with higher powers, so that he truly can be *servus servorum Dei* (the servant of the servants of God)" (p. 175). Moreover, even Lee Iacocca, author and retired corporate executive, states the importance of service. In his book entitled, *Where Have All the Leaders Gone?* (2007), he summarizes his idea of leadership (p. 245): "That's leadership. To decide that your life isn't just about making a lot of money, but about being part of a bigger picture. To get serious about returning something to society."

Blanchard and Hodges (2005) speak to service through leadership. They feel leadership and management processes cannot be separated when serving others. Both are equally important. “Servant leadership incorporates a combination of leadership and management. Both are leadership roles...leaders need to set a course and implement it with a focus on serving others.” (p. 84). In addition, they consider the concept of servant leadership as one that necessitates a leader’s total being in four domains (p. 31): “Leading like Jesus involves the alignment of four leadership domains: heart, head, hands, and habits.” When we consider the first domain, the heart, leaders must consciously choose to serve themselves or others. The head domain means the leader actively considers how they will fulfill their role through the relationships of those they wish to influence. When a leader’s actions demonstrate what is in their heart and head, that is the “hands domain”. And, finally, the habits domain is the renewal of commitment to leadership as a service role rather than a selfish one.

J. O. Sanders (2007) discusses how someone is prepared for leadership through service (pp. 51-64, 72): “God prepares leaders with a specific place and task in mind.” and leaders inspire others to service. God develops leaders through discipline (leaders obey a discipline imposed from without), vision (leaders have optimism and hope), wisdom (a leader’s judgment is based on spiritual and moral truth), decision (decision making is swift and clear, based on the facts that are in), courage (leaders have moral courage in difficult times), and, finally, humility (leaders choose to be servants). A person must choose to be a servant, or, God cannot be part of the leadership equation.

Moreover, spiritual leaders (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011) move through a God-guided process that is represented in these six stages (p. 70): 1) sovereign foundation (family experiences, factors in early life and responses to those factors); 2) inner life growth (developing one’s own individual character and spirituality – the experience of conversion; 3) ministry maturity (first experiences to serve others and develop skills – sharing faith with people; 4) life maturing (years taking leadership opportunities to find their strengths and weaknesses and to use all to grow); 5) convergence (life experiences converging into a job or responsibility that causes them to draw on all they have experienced in order to lead); 6) afterglow (few people achieve this- after serving God faithfully, use life as a celebration and a chance to teach others and make a difference in society). Moreover, the authors feel (p. 74) that “people will not become spiritual leaders unless God calls them to the role and equips them for it.”

**It is this process that is, in fact, most indicative of Sr. Jane Scully’s spiritual journey.**

### Leadership Styles:

There is a range of leadership styles and no one style in particular is best; there is no one way to lead others. Most texts discuss three main styles: autocratic, democratic, and laissez faire. Autocratic leaders never consult their employees. They reserve all decision-making power and communicate instructions to employees, expecting action. Democratic leaders also reserve final decision-making power; however, they do reach decisions after consulting with employees and taking into consideration other opinions. Laissez faire leaders are the most liberal, reserving little decision-making power at all. They trust subordinates to make decisions and communicate on an as-needed basis. Again, no one style is perfect and many times style is determined not only by the leader, but the maturity of employees as well as the situation at hand (Boone & Kurtz, 2010, p. 234).

Shortly, we will examine the life of Catherine McAuley, foundress of the Sisters of Mercy. Her

leadership style has been researched through evidence accumulated from her personal letters and accounts written by sisters in the Order. When discussing leadership style from a Mercy perspective, Carney (2011) states “because the most compelling leaders are not those who follow a list of rules devised by a consultant, but those who move from somewhere within and the most important determinant of one’s leadership style is motivation. . . . Leadership from a merciful space as a Work of Mercy is perhaps a thought worth pursuing” (pp. 1, 11).

## **CHAPTER 10: LEADERSHIP AND PERSONALITY**

Sr. Jane Scully’s leadership can be analyzed on many levels. One way (which was actually the intent) is to “plug” her into any of the aforementioned theories and state “this is Jane”. However, the result of this research was not so simple. In fact, the surprise and the delight was investigating the intricacies of servant leadership, which, in my opinion, is the puzzle piece that completes the picture of Sr. Jane.

To try to explain her in any other way, in concert with any other leadership theory would be both generic and sterile. Jane’s personality is neither and neither was her style. She is a woman led by faith – faith is not a sterile concept. It is the very essence of God tied to the human spirit. It comes through in ways that are sometimes unexpected.

Moreover, some would say that Jane Scully must be motivated by vanity to request a work be completed on her life. As I have had the privilege of getting to know this humble woman, vanity is not a part of Sr. Jane’s constitution. Personally, as a servant leader, I believe she is awestruck at her own accomplishments. She was the humble woman who would have been content to linger among stacks of library books, yet she went on to accomplish so many things because of her faith. This tender woman told her story in the hopes of inspiring others. She is a firm example of keeping the faith and trusting in God.

*“I can do all things in Christ, who strengthens me.”* Sr. Jane appreciates that now more than ever.

## **CHAPTER 11: CATHERINE MCAULEY**

In order to fully appreciate the life of a Religious Sister of Mercy, it is fitting to begin at the founding of the Order of Mercy. Catherine McAuley was the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy in Dublin, Ireland, in 1831 (Bourke, 1987). An accomplished and loving woman, her Order had nearly 150 Sisters in fourteen foundations in Ireland and England by the time of Catherine’s death in 1841. By 1856, there were three thousand Sisters of Mercy worldwide: in Ireland, England, the United States, Newfoundland, Australia, New Zealand, Scotland and South America.

Catherine McAuley was born into a rather affluent family in 1778. Her parents (James and Elinor), both Catholic, had three children. James was a devout Catholic who believed strongly that the faith should be shared and practiced. He also felt education of the poor was key, that the key to being self-sufficient was learning a trade. James was also known to teach catechism in his back yard on Sundays and holidays (Nicola, 1996).

Unfortunately, Catherine's father died in 1783, leaving his wife, Elinor, a widow with three small children (Bourke, 1987). Elinor was not as devout in her religious faith or practices as her husband, and she longed to navigate the wealthier circles of Dublin society, which were predominantly Anglo-Irish and Protestant. These circles despised the Catholics, who were mostly poor and uneducated (p. 1). Elinor squandered her wealth and had to sell all her property to support her desired lifestyle. She ended up moving into a Protestant household and died in 1798, fifteen years after James. Her three children were left to be cared for by relatives, all of which were prejudiced against Catholics. Catherine was seventeen when her mother died and was the only child who remained loyal to the Catholic faith (Nicola, 1996). This was no small feat in Ireland at that time. It was difficult, even dangerous, to be a practicing Roman Catholic in the predominant Protestant environment (Sullivan, 1965; Nicola, 1996).

Catherine later moved into the home of the Callaghans, who were distant family relatives, and they later adopted her in 1803. She lived in their home for twenty years and cared for the Callaghans when they became old and frail. Catherine became known and loved for her sweet disposition, affectionate persona, and devotion to her adoptive parents. While the Callaghans were Protestant (and Quaker), they grew to appreciate Catherine's devotion to her faith and to the poor in particular. They shared the feeling of helping those in need and left Catherine with the financial means to help others. Catherine began to teach children, minister to the sick, and bring comfort to the elderly and dying (Bourke, 1987, pp. 3-4); much of this ministry grew from also witnessing James McAuley's activities (Nicola, 1996).

Bourke (1987) states that Catherine's spirituality deepened during the ensuing years, along with her devotion to prayer. From her many journeys into Dublin on behalf of her adoptive mother, Catherine had befriended several priests who gave her guidance. She slowly began to practice her Catholic faith publicly. When both Callaghans had passed away, Catherine, now forty-four, found herself an heiress. This provided her with the means (roughly equal to one million dollars) to establish the House of Mercy on Baggot Street in Dublin. It would consist of classrooms, a chapel, and a dormitory for the unemployed and for homeless servant girls (p. 5). She likewise had several small rooms for any women who may wish to join the House of Mercy. Soon, it was filled to capacity, with outreach programs in hospitals and private homes. According to Savage (as cited in Nicola, 1996) Catherine went to France to study their schools and dedicated the House of Mercy to making women become more intellectual, stronger in the Catholic faith, and more astute in homemaking skills.

The House of Mercy soon came into controversy. While Catherine received an incredible amount of support from the local community, the organization had no logical "fit" within the Catholic Church. The House was not part of a cloistered Order (the only available religious alternative for unmarried women who wished to serve God at the time), and there was even concern that Catherine's House of Mercy attraction to lay Catholic women was preventing women from entering the convent (Bourke, 1987, pp. 6-8). This would later be the precipice to launch the Order of Religious Sisters of Mercy in 1831, because Catherine would use the controversy to fit her needs – to allow religious women to go out into the communities to serve others. The critics had to acknowledge her success and accommodate a new way of considering the lives of women religious in the Catholic Church. Catherine established the first convent of the Sisters of Mercy in 1831 and

required her novices to take a unique vow, one that would give them their mission: “the service of the poor, sick, and ignorant” (Savage, 1949; Nicola, 1996, p. 40).

What can we say about a woman who had never intended on being a member of a religious order? What do we know about her leadership style? First, we know she was a community builder. Catherine had first established a non-religious community on Baggot Street in Dublin for women who needed training in a respectable trade. According to Bourke (1987), Catherine had two special “charismatic gifts”: a compassionate heart and a “power to attract others...to offer themselves for ... merciful service.” (p. 62). These charismatic leadership qualities would serve to set the tone for her Order and all who entered, including Jane Scully.

#### Sisters of Mercy in Pittsburgh:

Bishop Michael O’Connor, the first bishop of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, was recognized widely for his dedication to Catholic education in western Pennsylvania. Once, while visiting Carlow, Ireland in 1843, he became familiar with the Sisters of Mercy Order and their unique mission of educating women. Sister Frances Warde, head of the convent in Carlow, was petitioned by Bishop O’Connor to bring Catholic women’s education to Pittsburgh in the United States (Nicola, 1996; Banovatz and Seamen, 1976). Sr. Warde agreed and she and six other Mercy sisters left Carlow, arriving in Pittsburgh on December 21, 1843 (Nicola, 1996).

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## The Importance of Narrative for the Life of Mercy Charism

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Liberation theologian, Jon Sobrino (1988), suggests that spirituality, any distinct form of spirituality, has three prerequisites. First, you must be honest about the reality around you, especially when it involves the disenfranchised. Second, do not turn away from what you see, but be “faithful” to these experiences, encounters. Third, after you “see” and “see” without turning away, let ourselves be “swept along by the ‘more’ of reality.” Live these moments attentively, saying “yes” to one step, then another step, moving into that reality such that you find yourself in a new place with new eyes and a new heart, especially those challenging realities; in terms of the life and future of Mercy *spirituality*, as illuminated by its foundress, Catherine McAuley, we might take heed of Sobrino’s suggestion in terms of the present and emerging diverse religious/spiritual landscape.

There are many within the circle of Mercy who are working to develop and offer programs where their aim is to pass on, nurture, and further contribute to the aliveness of what we call the Mercy “charism,” which is understood to be a gift of the Spirit, and commonly referred to as Mercy spirituality. This charism/spirituality shapes the mission of our sponsored and supported institutions. Yet, at this point, the role of understanding and fostering of this charism within the mission of our diverse ministries is no longer limited to “the sisters,” or even primarily rest with them.

Today, the lived experience and active identity of Mercy sponsored or supported institutions rest on the shoulders of people from many different faith traditions, as well as people who have limited experience within religious traditions. Many are practicing Catholics; many are non-practicing; many are of other Christian traditions, active and not. There are women and men of other religious traditions, active and not. There are women and men who are of no religious traditions. These women and men are deeply committed to the mission of Mercy and their role is to serve in leadership at administration levels. The changing landscape is part of a larger shift that is occurring. The broader social, cultural, religious/spiritual landscape itself is undergoing adjustment, if not a more radical, cathartic upheaval.

U.S. mainline Christian religions are being affected (Pew, 2015). We see this on Mercy campuses with an increase of “nones,” those not associated with any religion, who can overlap with “spiritual but not religious,” but not necessarily. Succinctly, in terms of affiliation with Christianity, the decline is across age cohorts, but increasingly so as you move down the age scale. While there is an influx in terms of Catholics and Protestants from Mexico, Central, and South America, the median age for Catholics and Protestants is on the rise.

When we are bone honest about this reality, we know a “Catholic” context that was automatically infused into a Mercy environment at another time cannot be assumed today. And, while any religious form has boundaries, consistencies, and a centralizing story and orthodoxy, we find there is increasing discussion about what “Catholic” should mean, require, and call forth in sponsored institutions, particularly those devoted to higher education, where a dialogue of ideas is to be valued. Each generation continues to re-articulate and re-appropriate the living Catholic tradition. This being so, what is reality showing us, asking us, and inviting us to be about when it comes to “Catholic” and “Mercy”?

While this paper is not going to try to figure out “Catholic” or the “Catholic Mercy” interdependence, it will suggest that along with Sobrino’s prerequisites about honesty to reality, fidelity to that reality, and a willingness to be carried into the more of that reality, are a list of skills and habits that could aid individuals and communities in grasping the mission of Mercy, within the context of “Catholic.” These skills and habits have been honed by the Catholic tradition over the centuries, but are not particularly “Catholic” or “Mercy.” Yet, they have helped practitioners come to some understanding and experience of the Catholic, and Mercy, ethos. Attention to and experience with these five elements could be helpful to people who are actively attracted to Mercy and to those in leadership positions within Mercy ministries, especially those who are not necessarily familiar with the broad Catholic culture.

This is not to suggest that you can have Mercy spirituality without the Catholic Christian ocean in which it swims. However, *honesty to reality* suggest that the makeup, identity, and voice of the broader community of Mercy is shifting, as will its eventual structure. To ignore this dynamic is to fail to attend to how Mercy is evolving and fail to see and hear where Mercy, itself, is being invited. When a religious form is being challenged and, in some ways deconstructed or pruned, the question is, what is emerging? How will Mercy (and Catholic) engage this dynamic shifting that is ripe with possibilities, but in a time of change is also vulnerable to forgetting the best that has been garnered from centuries past?

Considering an awareness of our shifting reality, and of both possibilities and dangers, I suggest five topics that the larger community of Mercy and those desirous of deepening their connection or identity within a Mercy spirituality and ministry may wish to explore. These areas, I believe, are part-and-parcel of the spiritual journey within the Catholic tradition, but because they have been part of the “wallpaper,” Mercy communities have not always explicitly named and defined them within the Mercy tradition itself. These areas include:

1. Aesthetic sensitivity
2. Complex use of analogy and metaphor
3. Nurturing of religious imagination
4. Contemplation
5. The use and development of narrative

Aesthetic sensitivity is not about art, per se, but is more about being aware of relationships and connections, and the quality of these. Such as appreciating when we find layers of stories that form a kind of movement story, like the story of each person who needs to become a migrant,

on a journey to safety. The back stories, historical, political, environmental, economic . . . stories add up in many ways. An aesthetic sensitivity means we are attentive and caring about the hard and subtle characteristics of the physical environment, knowing the power that shapes, lighting, beauty, materials, space have on influencing us, to support or pressure communities. An aesthetic awareness and appreciation allows us to hear the nearly-silent, or silenced, lament of the world, of the child, of the neighbor, of the ocean, and realize that each of these is a sound, one that participates in the fullness of the song of the world. Aesthetic sensitivity re-members gargantuan reverberations in the breaking of the bread, the pouring of the wine into an empty cup, and the drip of an ocean in the washing of an old laborer's feet. Ancient sounds, forms, motions, words, and stories have long play, even when we are deaf or blind to them, but when we are alert and attentive to them, they enrich our lives and help us to see the rich contours, influences, and networks, the goodness and illness of relationships, the necessity of beauty, of all kinds, in our lives, all lives. As such, it is the quality of relationships, all kinds of relationships, that brings us to understand justice, injustice, and mercy justice.

Second, facility with analogy and metaphor acts as tool that helps us delve into those layers of relationships and connections, break them open to their nuance, across centuries, across disciplines, and across tribes. With these poetic language and symbolic tools, we hear and see that metaphors often rattle and bang together, demanding our attention – sometimes I think God is like an old, crumbly newspaper, a decomposing idea, then this “Mystery” interrupts me like Facetime . . . suddenly in my face! Or, as an analogy, an elusive presence is my silent friend.

Sobrino would agree that we only know deep reality, even the reality of “God,” through the mediation of reality. We come to know life by engaging life. But it is only by way of metaphor and analogy that we grasp some thread of it and dialogue about it – how does a new father speak about his new born daughter? The most meaningful encounters that humans experience cannot be fully captured in descriptions, or even qualified. We run after, seeking meaning, as we should, and as we must. Analogy and metaphor are tools for what we call the journey of the “soul.” The soul in this case is not separate or different from our very being, but speaks to the most comprehensive and meaningful sense of who we are, and to a reality that is grander than we can fully know or capture.

Third, our religious imaginations speak to the incomprehensibility of creation, but they are easily tamed, domesticated, and franchised. Amid this taming process our vision, our destiny, becomes ever more short-sighted. Wonder is reduced to a commodity that can be quantified, codified, monetized, and sold.

Yet, our imaginations are meant for more. For example, when we find ourselves near the margins of society, we may hear differently, see differently, and our imaginations can be stirred in directions that go against the status quo. Questions change. But a tamed imagination, a tamed religious and ethical imagination, is comfortable with what is, and may be less likely to ask questions that disturb, to wonder outside “the box,” to ask “God” questions and moral questions that challenge the norm. A tamed religious imagination is like having it shut up in a box that is nailed shut. On the other hand, an alive religious imagination may seek to open that box, or even burn it, if it constricts reflection and an honest engagement with important questions about how we understand reality, how we live meaning and value, neighborliness and love.

Fourth, contemplation is integral to the spiritual journey, and to the journey of Mercy. It is time when we are open to the presence of Mystery in our lives and in the world, whether we call this presence “Spirit,” “God,” “Allah,” beyond any name, the essence of life, or the benefits of nature.

The practice of contemplation is just that, a practice, because we constantly need reminding concerning the importance of life, what our priorities are, what many religious traditions refer to as the “sacredness” of life, and of death, and of what happens between these poles. Contemplation gives us pause, moments when we sense, somehow, the connections, affinities, relationships, and paradoxes in our lives, as well as disconnections and inconsistencies. It is time when we move away from the clatter and clutter, so we might hear and reflect upon our stories, our own, and perhaps another’s. This is time and reflective processes that can help us stop, so we can hear, feel, and see how our stories fit within larger stories, ancient ones and evolving ones, and maybe wonder about all those wisdom stories. It is time for silence, stillness, walks . . . time off the grid, off the phone, off the internet, off social media, maybe just sitting on the steps.

We are only beginning to calculate the benefits as well as the harm and dangers of so much time spent engaging various kinds of media and artificial intelligence. However, the questions involve more than how much time should one spend or not with our devices, but how do these instruments influence the further evolution of what it means to be human? How do they enhance or detract from the flourishing of fair, just, compassionate, and creative individuals and societies? Contemplation is not the same as a de-stress exercise. All the great religious traditions have come down on the side of the need for contemplation and the role of silence and reflection as non-negotiables when it comes to growth and the maturing of the person, and communities.

Finally, we consider the importance of practicing the art of narrative. What do we mean by this? In conjunction with the preceding four elements, the art of narrative begins with listening, or what some refer to as contemplative listening – we listen for the story.

Thomas H. Groome (1980) writes: “No people can be ‘a people’ without a shared past. The Christian faith community is heir to a tradition of divine revelation and lived response to that revelation.” More so, he writes:

Like all pilgrims, we must know and remember whence we have come if we are to share a common present and shape our future together. New members of the covenant have a special need to hear the Story of the community, and present members need to be constantly reclaiming it. If we forget our Story, then we become a wandering people with no way of knowing the meaning of God’s activity in our present or the response expected of us in our time.

Listening is half the story. To listen for the thread of the evolving narrative is to discover the story – an unfolding story is not a finished story, but usually a thread perdures.

We listen for how Creation stories, the Hebrew Exodus story and Exile story, the Jesus story, the Catherine McAuley story, your story, the stranger’s story, the Buddha’s story, Muhammad’s story, Earth’s story . . . reveal, beg, lift, surprise, and make demands. Our personal and collective stories



impact each other – your story forces me to change, or to work hard at not changing. But in the end, all our stories change. Our stories and their meanings adjust over time. As they age, we age, we tell them differently. Listening includes listening to the past, questioning and encountering the past, even confronting it, as well as being attentive to the present as it unfolds before us not untouched by the stories we tell and hear.

In conjunction with the previous four topics, the process of discovering, entering, and shaping narratives is an adventure, like riding a roaring river that flows and tumbles, twirling with whirlpools, as it makes its way to the sea. Sometimes, one can hardly stay afloat; it can be confusing and frightening. Yet, in the process of it all we stretch toward telling each other who we are, what we need, who we love, who we hate, what we did, what we should be doing, what we dream, what questions we have, where we have been, and hope to go. In the process, we might even ask: “Who are you and where are you going, even why?” Everyone deserves a story that awards meaning and speaks of opportunity to grow, live, love, create, sing, and die well. A Mercy spirituality, a Mercy charism, such as embodied by Catherine McAuley and the sisters and friends that followed her, holds that a reality, many refer to as “God,” listens to us deeply and desires for us goodness, beauty, and a fullness to each of our stories. Trusting that there is a deep listening that is happening, a kind of ultimate and eternal listening where nothing is lost, we sense the significance of our own participation in ongoing creation, in the ongoing storying of the world, at least in this little corner of the universe.

Some believe there is no mega story, no grand narrative from which we ultimately derive our place and purpose and destiny, or so this take on contemporary belief/story goes... rather there are simply the events, encounters, large and small, through which we try to capture a glimmer of meaning in terms of our existence and purpose and destiny. Yes, the aggregate is always in flux.

However, despite this, we remember the stories, and tell the tales, eking out words grown through reflection and dialogue. Words and images are symbols whose meaning is transported across the in-between spaces between us in hope that they are caught and understood by the other, connecting us to each other, making us more than we were before. There is always the risk of not being heard, not being seen, or understood, of being misunderstood. That is the risk, if not also the thrill. If it were benign, would it be so important?

Silence is necessary in our storying, needed so we can hear what is and is not spoken. But without the storying of *mercy*, of the seeing, feeling, framing, remembering, describing and sharing of our lives, especially by those who suffer and suffer most, but against a backdrop, a story that is grander than any of our own, the charism limps – mercy as *gift* is revealed when we struggle to listen, struggle to see the relationships, to find expression, to read the metaphors and symbols, and to participate in and respond to the narratives of mercy-less-ness and mercy-full-ness. In the jungle of life, we ache to discover a golden thread that delivers meaning, solace, challenge, hope, and vision through our encounters – there is no grand deposit of Mercy to be simply inherited. This inheritance is gift, but it does not find its place generation-to-generation without passion and a wrestling for it as if you were Jacob.

Indeed, we are to look for it, listen for it, this was always so, really; we must mine the past, be alert

now, and seek a future for all others and all other kinds who follow. We must be active participants in the art of contemplation personally and in terms of how we speak with each other, how we share our questions, emotions, hearts, and minds, dreams and visions. For in the dialogue we discover connections, patterns, analogies, metaphors, symbols, ethical quandaries, challenges, and invitations that can move us into the depth of discernment, and then into the works of Mercy needed today.

The good news is that the art of narrative, as an intricate part of Mercy spirituality, is a grand part of the Catholic Mercy tradition. Ritual is storytelling, Scripture is a collection of stories, analogies, legends, myths, and more, always in need of being let out of little boxes of narrow interpretation. Narrative in the context of Mercy spirituality is a life-giving and essential art that is necessary for the life of this form of spirituality. It requires the stories of adventures, poets, writers, builders, artists, prophets, musicians, scientists, seekers, administrators, gardeners, dreamers, teachers, athletes, business folks, healers, cooks, programmers, mothers, fathers, sailors, engineers, tree huggers, beekeepers, water-keepers, night-lovers, the elderly, and the young, the dead and the living.

This paper asserts that any viable spirituality today must demonstrate respect and gratitude for the past. Simultaneously, it must have meaningful engagement with a dynamic pluralistic landscape, trusting that all deep forms of spirituality lean into the future. The religious/spiritual landscape quivers as we speak, the players are changing, roles are being ejected or redefined, but the 21st century need for Mercy as a spiritual, creative, moral, ethical and compassionate force against systems of evil, as well as Mercy as consolation and prophetic hope, is unparalleled.

As “Catholic Mercy” sponsored and supported ministries evolve, their leaders’ facility with the above skills and habits, along with Sobrino’s prerequisites, could be helpful as we all strive to engage, understand, and to put into practice, and form, key mission content and values.

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# **Learning an Administrative Ethic from Catherine McAuley**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This discussion posits that at a time when leaders at all levels of higher education are forced to deal with unprecedented economic and social pressures, it is valuable to seek out other models of leadership from within the religious traditions of our sponsoring orders to articulate a more nuanced understanding of what mission-driven leadership might look like. Using Catherine McAuley (foundress of the Sisters of Mercy) as an example, this article illustrates how looking for leadership models from within our own traditions offers us an opportunity to articulate and embody a meaningful, reflective administrative ethic that reflects the mission of the university and serves the university's constituents well.

## **LEARNING AN ADMINISTRATIVE ETHIC FROM CATHERINE MCAULEY**

Amid the myriad of arguments waged in public forums about the problems of higher education and its complex future, one issue that repeatedly gains attention is administrative leadership. Critics claim that the rising costs of college are due, in part, to administrative bloat left unchecked (Pearlstein, 2015), and as more federal assessment regulations are put in place to monitor the so-called “product” of higher education, institutions, university administrators, and faculty are under pressure (Will, 2014). In this environment, boards of public universities have recently opted to hire those with professional, often corporate, management experience, much to the dismay of many faculty and some alumni (Vara, 2015).

Although Catholic colleges and universities, to this point, have generally eschewed overtly corporate models of educational leadership, university administrators at all levels—from university presidents to program coordinators—have not been protected from the economic, political, and personal pressures those at public universities face. As Bolman and Gallos (2011) note, university leaders are forced to negotiate the complex relationship (and often competing values and practices) between corporate America and higher education institutions, all while “[coping] with profound changes in technology, major demographic and global shifts in student populations, formidable new competitors in for-profit and virtual universities, and widespread concerns that higher education lags in giving today's citizens and tomorrow's workforce the twenty-first-century skills and values they need” (p. 6). These challenges are complicated in Catholic institutions of higher education, where the same external forces must also be negotiated with and between the missions of founding religious sponsors and a university's religiously diverse administrators, faculty, staff, and students.

For faculty and administrative staff seeking to navigate this complex terrain, the mission of an institution provides one point on the compass to help us find our way. At Mercy institutions, the mission “[stands] within the lineage of the Catholic intellectual tradition in its pursuit of truth and integration of knowledge for the common good” (Conference for Mercy Higher Education), a principle rooted in the Mercy charism that “impels its members toward the compassionate service of

the poor, sick, and uneducated” (Sanders, 2010). Although these missions are carefully considered and discussed within university communities and often rooted in the core principles and values of their founding religious communities, they can seem somewhat abstract and distant from our lived realities within the complex systems of higher education. Therefore, it is valuable to seek out other models of leadership from within the religious traditions of our sponsoring orders to articulate a more nuanced understanding of what mission-driven leadership could look like.

This presentation illustrates such a reading, using Catherine McAuley (1787-1841), foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, as an example. McAuley herself is an intriguing figure for several reasons, not least of which was her tenacity as an unmarried woman, unaffiliated with a religious order, to found an institute to serve Dublin’s poor. Because McAuley’s letters have been so carefully preserved by the Mercy Congregational Archives in Dublin and contextualized by Sister Mary C. Sullivan’s extensive archival research, it has not been difficult to hear McAuley’s voice—or see her leadership—through her writing. What I offer here is a rhetorical reading of Catherine McAuley’s leadership as seen in a selection of primary documents: her draft of the founding documents of the Sisters of Mercy, and the letters she wrote to other sisters, novices, and clergy.

My discussion of these texts is shaped by the belief that an individual’s administrative ethic—the core principles that shape the large and small administrative decisions she makes—is made visible through the rhetorical choices she makes in communicating with others. As J. Patrick Murphy (1991) notes, university leaders, particularly those at Catholic institutions, are singularly responsible for “the care of organizational values” (p. 3), which they enact through “speeches, stories, rituals, jargon, and practices”. These communicative acts build community around shared goals and outcomes, the principles that shape a university’s embodied mission. By closely examining McAuley’s language, we can see evidence of the values and principles she used to shape the mission of the Order. More specifically, I’ll offer examples of how McAuley used rhetorics of humility and humor to build an administrative ethic of collaborative, pragmatic optimism that focused her leadership and shaped the Order’s mission to serve the most vulnerable of her community.<sup>2</sup> McAuley’s example illustrates how administrators at all levels at Mercy institutions of higher education might be challenged to look to their universities’ source material, as it were, to articulate and embody a meaningful, reflective administrative ethic that reflects the mission of the university.

## COMMUNITY BUILDING THROUGH AUTONOMY

Using an inheritance from a Protestant benefactor, Catherine McAuley founded the Institute of Mercy in 1827 with permission from Dublin’s Archbishop Daniel Murray, and began welcoming women of good character who preferred “conventual life [but who were] prevented [from] embracing it from the nature of property or connections” (Sullivan, 1995, p. 41). McAuley originally had no intention of founding a religious Order. She believed they were too strict, and she rejected the idea of enclosure. To her, it made no sense for religious women to be cloistered and isolated; instead, she believed religious women needed to be out in the world, helping those who were poor and sick, materially and spiritually. However, when local priests made moves to co-opt the Mercy Institute for the Sisters of Charity, McAuley reconsidered and began the process to become a sister so that her organization might secure official sanction from the church as the Sisters of Mercy.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this discussion, I’m defining “pragmatic optimism” as a collection of fundamentally *hopeful* beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that are rooted in the practicalities of the world with all of its limitations, injustices, promises, and opportunities.

In 1832, shortly after she took her vows, McAuley began drafting the Sisters of Mercy Rules and Constitution in consultation with several priests in Dublin. To do so, McAuley used the extant Rules and Constitution of the Presentation Sisters as a model. By comparing McAuley's text with its source material and noting the additions and revisions McAuley made, we see evidence of how her humility shaped the development of the Order. She did this first by revising the rules attending the office of Mother Superior.

The Presentation Sisters Rules begin with this phrase: "The Mother Superior to govern with advantage to the Community and merit to herself, must shew herself a model of regular observance, that becoming a pattern to her little flock, she may by example more powerfully engage them to the strict accomplishment of the duties of the Institute" (Sullivan, 1995, p. 321). McAuley changed the phrase "a pattern to her little flock" to "a pattern to her Community" (Sullivan, 1995, p. 321). This shift demonstrates McAuley's unique understanding of her role as a leader of this community: the other Sisters were neither "hers" nor "a flock" in need of constant care and attention, but rather women who contributed in unique ways to their unified religious community.

A careful reading of McAuley's revisions to the rules illustrates a shift in the culture of the convent itself, decentralizing the authority typically vested in the Mother Superior, the role she would take on as the foundress of the Order. She completely omitted an article from the Presentation Sisters' Rules that established guidelines for how sisters should refer to the Mother Superior; rather than demanding that novices and sisters call her Mother, McAuley's omission of this article suggests that everyone in the home, regardless of role, was to be called "sister" (Sullivan, 1995, p. 304, n.26). While Mercy sisters and novices persisted in calling McAuley "Mother," it was a choice, rather than a rule, suggesting the name was given out of respect to McAuley's leadership and guidance instead of a mandated statement of deference to authority. McAuley's humble disposition led one novice to reflect, "The most amiable trait in [McAuley's] character which we believed we discerned was a total absence of everything in her manner telling, 'I am the Foundress'" (Sullivan, 1995, p. 230).

In this regard, McAuley's humble understanding of herself as a leader reflects a component of the more contemporary notion of servant leadership, first outlined by Robert Greenleaf (1977), who argued that an ethical leader's "power is used to create opportunity and alternatives so that individuals may choose and build autonomy" (p.23). As Mary Carmel Bourke (1987) argues, McAuley's "liberating authority" offered her sisters autonomy (p. 69), which "stemmed from her respect for all her Sisters and her perception of the dignity and integrity of each person and the need for freedom, within authority, to develop fully as a human person and a daughter of God" (p. 63). Bourke points to examples from McAuley's letters to her sisters that illustrate her support for their individuality. To an unnamed sister, McAuley wrote, "I leave you free to do what you think best. I am satisfied you will not act imprudently, and this conviction makes me happy" (p. 68). And to Sister Elizabeth Moore in Limerick, she encouraged, "Never suppose you can make me feel displeasure by giving any opinion that occurs to you" (p.69). McAuley believed in her Sisters and she expressed that belief freely and openly, encouraging them to find ways to thrive in the Order that McAuley created and they built together.



## HUMILITY IN LOSS

McAuley's humility helped to build an egalitarian community within the Order, but she also used it to negotiate within the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. Perhaps one of McAuley's greatest challenges came in 1837, when the Sisters of Mercy Chaplain, Fr. Daniel Burke, was reassigned to Africa, leaving the House on Baggot Street without a dedicated priest to deliver sacraments to the sisters, the women living at Mercy House, or the schoolgirls preparing for communion and confirmation. In order for the Sisters to have another priest assigned as Chaplain from the neighboring St. Andrew's parish, the pastor of St. Andrews, Dr. Walter Meyler, presented McAuley with two options: they could either pay £50 to the parish as compensation for a chaplain (which Meyler well knew was more than the sisters could afford), or they could have a different priest assigned for each day of the week who would come when called for (Sullivan, 2012, p. 207). This created a significant challenge to the sisters; because they were unable to pay Meyler's steep fee, they had to travel through the city each Sunday or skip Mass altogether in inclement weather. No Mass meant no collection plate, and so a significant portion of the House's income was cut by Meyler's decision.

Her direct pleas to Meyler to reconsider his price went unheard, so McAuley appealed to other priests with whom she had better relationships to plead her case. The letters from these men show support for McAuley's cause, yet few were willing to speak to Meyler on McAuley's behalf (Sullivan, 2004, p.103). Her friend, Father Michael Blake, implored McAuley to be cautious, writing, "I must in the first place commend your prudence in avoiding, whatever your trials may be, every appearance of resisting authority. This will secure to yourself and your excellent Community great interior peace, and as far as your case is known, will enable you to give very edifying example" (Sullivan, 2004, p.107).

In this exchange, and in McAuley's letters to Meyler, we see how McAuley was constrained by her position as a woman in the church. McAuley offered to show evidence of the Sisters' accounts, illustrating how little money they had, but her logical arguments went unheeded. She made emotional appeals, arguing that women were endangered by having to wander through the city to receive sacraments. Again, no traction. Although her clergy friends believed McAuley's character and humility would carry the argument, Meyler remained unmoved. Blake's letter illustrates how limited her rhetorical options were, but it also underscores a key component of McAuley's administrative ethic; that is, as the leader of the Sisters of Mercy, her example would be observed and interpreted by those who followed her. Throughout her life, McAuley returned to this idea, often articulating to novices that Sisters must "give good example" to members of their community (Sullivan, 2004, p. 463).

In letters to her sisters at that time, McAuley expressed deep frustration with her lack of progress on the chaplaincy issue, describing the ongoing controversy with Meyler as "humiliating" (Sullivan, 2004, p. 119). Their disagreement continued and escalated for several weeks, but finally, McAuley's humility won out, and she conceded to his paltry offering. McAuley's obedience to the unyielding Meyler took a toll. She referred to the controversy with Meyler as "more than an ordinary portion of the Cross" that she was left to bear (Sullivan, 2004, p. 119). In this moment, we see a rightfully frustrated and angry woman whose efforts to help those in need are stifled by



the seemingly arbitrary whims of a local priest. However, we also see a woman who, according to Sullivan, “believed profoundly in the necessity of true humility if one wished to follow the example of Jesus” (Sullivan, 2012, p. 213). Seen from an historical lens, we might understand McAuley’s humility as a necessity—as a woman trying to work in the hierarchy of the church, she had a better chance of getting what she needed by proving herself to be pliant and humble. But as Sullivan claims, “Humility...could not be a matter of always deferring to the judgment of others. [McAuley’s] assertions were not assertions of her self as such, but a consequence of what she felt she had to do... for others” (Sullivan, 2012, p. 215).

This is another place where McAuley can teach us. In this instance, McAuley’s humility was not enough to accomplish her goals, and in fact, the whole ordeal was taxing in more ways than one: In her letters from that time, she repeated often how humiliating the experience was, asking of Sister Frances Warde, “Pray fervently to God to take all bitterness from me. I can scarcely think of what has been done to me without resentment. May God forgive me and make me humble” (Sullivan, 2004, p. 144). But McAuley’s humility (as Father Burke predicted) served as an example to others, and she embodied Greenleaf’s notion that the servant leader focuses on acceptance of others’ choices, even if one disagrees with those choices (1977, p. 10). As McAuley’s conflict with Rev. Meyler shows us, leadership isn’t always about winning, but also losing in a manner that, despite disappointment, focuses on acceptance in a way that is consistent with our beliefs and values.

This is a particularly important point for us now when discourse within and about higher education is so tense. Faculty and administrators are called on to develop interactive, high-impact learning experiences for students at the same time that budgets are cut and the faculty and staff positions that would help us accomplish those goals are frozen. Our arguments for more resources, however valid and well-articulated, often go unheeded as universities seek to do more with less. In this sense, McAuley’s model is helpful—we must accept our losses given our institution’s material constraints and determine how we will respond, knowing that our actions will serve as a model to those who look to us for guidance. Will we be bitter and angry? Or will we work to find solutions that are in the best interest of our students, our institutions, and ourselves? Moreover, what example does our reaction set for those we lead? It should be no surprise that faculty, staff, and students watch the actions (and reactions) of university administrators closely. If we wish our colleagues to seek humane, compassionate solutions to vexing problems, we must model that behavior ourselves.

## **HUMOR, JOY, AND ENCOURAGEMENT**

Despite the significant leadership challenges McAuley faced, her contemporaries often remarked on her sense of humor and warmth, and perhaps unsurprisingly, her wit was most apparent in the less guarded letters she wrote to her fellow sisters. Many of those letters were written in verse rather than prose, and her poems allowed her to be playful, sincere, and warm. In a letter written late in life to a novice, she explained that the joy and solace she finds writing in verse “recall[s] the days of my youth / in which ‘twas my pastime, my folly, my play” (Sullivan, 2004, p. 66). Verse allowed McAuley to reclaim some of her youthful exuberance that the day-to-day business of running a convent often stifled. However, it is in her verse that we how her warmth and humor helped build relationships with those with whom she worked most closely. For example, in 1835, McAuley received a note in verse from the novices in the house requesting funds to pay for the ingredients for a cake.

They wrote,

Dear Reverend Mother, our cook & your namesake  
 Wants to compose a most beautiful tea cake  
 For materials of which 'twill be needful to pay  
 And therefore for cash your petitioners pray. (Sullivan, 2004, p. 68)

The next morning, the novices found a note from McAuley written below their request:

Dear Sisters  
 Early this morning on leaving the choir  
 I did anticipate this—your desire  
 And sent out an order in time—to bespeak  
 What I hope you will find—a very nice cake. (Sullivan, 2004, p. 68-69)

Beside the note was a cake McAuley had purchased.

Another example can be seen in a poem McAuley wrote to Sister Mary Ann Doyle to commend her friend for the work she did in caring for the sick of Dublin during a cholera outbreak in the Spring of 1832. Because the ill lay on pallets on the floor, Doyle moved among the patients on her knees, prompting McAuley's verse:

You've hurt the marrow in the bone  
 Imploring aid and pity  
 And every Cardinal in Rome  
 Would say you saved the City.

Now that the story of your fame  
 In Annals may be seen  
 We'll give each wounded knee a name  
 Cholera—and—Cholerene. (Sullivan, 2004, p. 52)

What I find most noteworthy about these exchanges is not the quality of the verse, but rather the way the letters suggest an easy relationship between the Mother Superior and her sisters. The tone of the letter from the novices is playful and respectful but not subservient, and one could imagine that the novices thought a request in verse, McAuley's preferred form of correspondence, might encourage her to grant their request. But McAuley's response and her choice to purchase a cake to save the novices the work of shopping for and baking a cake illustrate McAuley's generous hospitality and warmth toward the novices. Likewise, McAuley's cheerful wordplay in her poem to Sister Mary Anne Doyle offers a genuine, heartfelt statement of thanks and praise, clearly communicating to Doyle that her sacrifice was observed, appreciated, and valued.

McAuley's humor and warmth toward her sisters developed out of a genuine appreciation for their efforts. As the Order grew and the original founding members were sent to establish Institutes across Ireland and England, McAuley wrote frequently to each of them to praise her Sisters for their work.

For example, after Sister Frances Warde established the Carlow Institute quickly in the summer of 1839, McAuley wrote to Warde, offering her congratulations: “I cannot attempt to describe the joy your letter afforded me. I fear I am in danger of getting a little jealous—poor Baggot Street is outdone if you make a foundation already” (Sullivan, 2004, p. 197). So impressed was McAuley by Warde’s success in Carlow that she joked that her own efforts at Baggot Street were being outshone by Warde’s accomplishments. But she did more than praise Warde; she also shared the complimentary words she received from Dr. Patrick Fitzgerald, the president of Carlow College who invited the Sisters of Mercy to his community. McAuley relayed to Warde, “Doctor Fitzgerald is delighted. The school exceeds all he hoped for. ‘I knew when I first cast my eye on her that she was the girl that would do all.’ He is really gratified—which is great comfort to me” (Sullivan, 2004, p. 197).

For McAuley to allow Warde’s accomplishments in Carlow to remain unacknowledged would have been uncharacteristic; indeed, McAuley consistently offered praise and encouragement to the women who contributed to the Order’s mission. Yet McAuley took her message one step further, sharing Dr. Fitzgerald’s pleasure with Warde and directly quoting his accolades. One could imagine how this might have thrilled Warde, not simply because she was doing her job well, but also because it was welcomed and appreciated by the Carlow authority and McAuley herself. McAuley’s willingness to commend and thank her colleagues without restraint had the effect of building a close-knit community in the Order; as Bourke notes, the Sisters of Mercy were held “together by ties of unity...a family spirit...[and McAuley’s] warm affection” (1987, p. 76).

McAuley’s letters illustrate a lightness to her day-to-day interactions with those around her, suggesting she held a world view that leaned toward hopeful optimism rather than gloom, despite the desperate conditions she saw every day. As Bourke notes, “McAuley was joyful, and without fear, because her heart was centered in God,” and she shared her optimism openly with her fellow sisters, instilling the same in them (1987, p. 12). Such affection and mutual high regard is an integral component of any community, but particularly when it faces internal and external challenges like those universities and colleges, regardless of religious affiliation, endure today. This isn’t to say that a cheerful demeanor alone is enough to carry a community through the turbulence of institutional economic uncertainty, ongoing assessment challenges, or changing student populations. For administrators and faculty grappling with the complexities of higher education, it can be difficult to maintain an attitude of humor and lightness, and one runs the risk of seeming out of touch or unrealistically optimistic if one glosses over difficult realities with a joke. It is crucial for university leaders to be honest about the challenges an academic community faces; however, when leaders balance humor and joy with honest realism, they demonstrate a kind of optimistic pragmatism that is intrinsically focused on the personal and human, building relationships within a community so that it might seek solutions to its own problems.

## **PRAGMATIC OPTIMISM THROUGH COLLABORATION**

When we see evidence of McAuley’s humility and humor in her writings, we begin to see how her rhetorical stance gave shape to the culture and mission of the Order. As the Order grew, her interest in preserving the collaborative nature of the Order developed, but her eye was always directed toward what was feasible and pragmatic. In writing to Rev. Rice, a Christian Brother advising her

as the Order expanded beyond Dublin, McAuley states assertively, “We do not seek to be engrafted with the good Sisters of Charity, who have only one [sic] noviciate, and one general superior—each branch of our Institute will have its own noviciate and be subject to the ordinary of the Diocese” (Sullivan, 2004, p. 55). Here, she explains her desire that the Sisters of Mercy will be less hierarchical than other orders of religious women; rather than having a centralized structure, each branch of the Order that will be established will function with more autonomy from Baggot Street, while still reporting directly to the local Diocese.

Bourke claims that McAuley, “had no desire to fashion replicas of herself, but built on the uniqueness, on the pluses and minuses of each person” (1987, p. 68). On the one hand, this could be viewed as an act of faith in her fellow sisters, and it was—she trusted them to carry out the mission of the Order as their community grew. But it was also a necessary reality. McAuley started the Order in her fifties, and so the Order was growing as she aged and dealt with more complicated health issues. For the Order to continue to thrive, it needed other leaders to do so. In some ways, the manner that McAuley structured the leadership of the new institutes was her own version of a succession plan, but more to the point, by underscoring and emphasizing her sisters’ agency to act with autonomy, McAuley uses humility to allow the Congregation to grow using the sisters’ strengths and the unique needs of each community they served.

In that regard, McAuley began to function as, in Greenleaf’s (term, a “trustee,” a person “in whom ultimate trust is placed,” but who “stand[s] outside” the daily workings of the organization and who have “the benefit of detachment” (1977, 23). For McAuley, this was a necessity; geography alone would have made it impossible for her to remain intimately involved in the workings of each Institute. However, McAuley wrote frequently to the women who were leading these Institutes, advising, encouraging, and providing the “big picture” view of the Order’s growth and future directions.

As Greenleaf notes, the trustee is a valued member of an organization’s leadership particularly because of how he or she enables others to take on servant-leadership roles (1977, p. 23). In the context of higher education, a university’s Board of Trustees obviously functions in this trustee role. However, I would argue that other leaders in the university, from the President and Provost to deans, department chairs, and program coordinators, are in a position to serve as trustees, empowering others to lead in meaningful ways. Instructors act as trustees when they involve students in developing the course policies or invite students to lead class discussion. Program coordinators, department chairs, deans, and supervisors can act as trustees, too, when they identify individuals who are talented and motivated to perform tasks that are both of interest to the individual and in service of the university’s mission and goals. In the end, a leader’s commitment to collaboration creates an environment in which all have the potential to learn, contribute to their community, and lead.

## **USING HISTORICAL MODELS OF LEADERSHIP IN CONTEMPORARY TIMES**

Earlier, I made the claim that McAuley’s rhetorical choices to use humor and humility gave shape to an overall ethic of collaborative, optimistic pragmatism. Although McAuley predates the rise of pragmatism as a philosophy, I believe we can see parallels between the two. McAuley’s writings illustrate an understanding that an individual’s thought and action are influenced by—and a response

to—the world around her, and she was interested in doing work that worked, work that helped people in their immediate circumstances and ultimately led them closer to God. It was her faith that gave rise to her optimism, just as it was her faith that led her to meaningful, practical work of educating those in need.

McAuley’s writings and legacy exemplify Daniel Wheeler’s (2012) description of servant leadership which is “not a set of techniques or activities” but rather “a way of being, a philosophy of living and influencing” (p. 13). Typically, servant-leaders are those who “use their power with people to accomplish common goals, understand that growth for them and others comes from being honest, monitor and process their own emotional issues and concerns, and enjoy and celebrate the successes of others,” while heeding “a call to serve” with authenticity, “showing humility and moral courage” (p. 15). These are all qualities that are all on display in McAuley’s writings described above.

As this close reading of McAuley’s writings shows, her administrative ethic is evident to and salient for contemporary readers, and her rhetorical and administrative strategies map neatly onto our own realities today, serving as a heuristic for us to consider our own leadership in our own institutions. Before looking to our institution’s historical models, we might consider our most pressing, vexing challenges. Do we struggle in our efforts to serve a traditionally underserved population of students with high financial, educational, and social needs? Are we faced with the apparent disconnect between mission-driven, liberal arts education and a student population more concerned with employment deliverables? Are we challenged by issues of shared governance, inequality among faculty and staff, or a neighborhood resistant to our institution’s plans?

Keeping these questions in mind, university leaders might turn to their university’s and founding order’s source documents, looking for examples of challenges our founders faced that parallel our own. When we do so, we are called to ask ourselves questions that challenge us to consider how we lead in ways that are congruent with our missions, such as the following:

- How do we maintain institutional goals and missions in light of increasing student need and budget constraints?
- How do we manage disappointment when initiatives fail or colleagues disappoint us?
- What are we doing to build humane relationships with our students and colleagues?
- How do we express ourselves authentically and ethically?
- How do we share responsibility to both distribute work and allow others to grow and thrive?
- How do our actions—the example we set for others—help to engage others in initiatives we value?
- How do we earn authority through what we do and how we treat others, rather than through title alone?

- What do we do to actively foster hope within ourselves and those with whom we work?

For those of us who have worked at Mercy institutions, McAuley's practical work has become our own, and it is our responsibility and opportunity to consider how McAuley's rhetorical strategies and administrative ethic might shape how we work with and for others at our own institutions. Doing so is particularly important today, as we seek to link our institutions to their founding congregations as the membership of those congregations shrinks. As Holtschneider and Morey (2000) note in their study of American Catholic colleges and universities, "religious women and men form personal relationships with faculty, staff, and students, and those personal relationships serve as the vehicle for the transmission of corporate values" (p. 5). However, as the presence of the religious women and men at Catholic universities decline, others within these institutions are charged with preserving and advancing the missions and charisms of their founding sponsors, finding unique ways to share governance, authority, and influence. The visions of these missions can be spread in other ways, too, particularly through the models we as faculty and administrators provide to students and colleagues.

Thus, we might consider the following questions: How do we foster collaboration amongst our colleagues to support our missions? How do we use humor and warmth to build relationships that can sustain us when things become difficult? How do we handle our failures with humility and grace? And finally, how do we work to find and support those within our own universities in need? These are undoubtedly challenging questions that require conversation, reflection, and principled action, but when we look to history to help make sense of the present, we might find new solutions that improve the day-to-day realities of our institutions for all who work, study, and seek to grow there.

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## The Challenge and the Art of Teaching Mercy Spirituality

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We are engaged in designing an online graduate certificate in Mercy Spirituality. This paper will reflect on the task of articulating and teaching an emerging Mercy spirituality as experienced through the charism of the Sisters of Mercy and the broader Mercy Community. In particular, we are interested in exploring questions about how mercy is understood and experienced in our secular, pluralistic world. What is a “Mercy” spirituality, and how do we teach about it with our students, graduate and undergraduate, who are largely unchurched and formed by the values of a relentlessly consumerist and individualistic culture? How do we speak of the heritage of the Sisters of Mercy without abstracting it from its rootedness in Catholic tradition? And, how do we, according to the example of the Sisters of Mercy, speak of Catholic tradition as open, welcoming, prophetic, and joyful?

Recognizing the work that has been accomplished and is currently being done, we will engage contemporary questions as we attempt to articulate the contours of a Mercy spirituality that is grounded in the rich, diverse, and ever developing tradition of Catholic theology and spirituality and informed by the heritage and ongoing practice of the Sisters of Mercy and their many lay associates and co-workers. Mercy spirituality engages the world and its myriad gifts and challenges with openness, attentiveness, prayer and contemplation, reverence for human life and all creation, an appreciation for beauty, a thirst for justice, a desire for peace, and the practice of compassion.

In our time together today, we will offer our thoughts on these issues and engage the Roundtable participants in reflection and discussion about their insights into sharing the Mercy charism in our campus communities and beyond.

I will begin by offering some theological foundations for our work, focusing particularly on the work of Johann Baptist Metz and his theological method of memory, narrative, and solidarity.

Long before the term began to be used (quite recently, actually) to describe spiritualities that not only seek inward peace but also outward peace and justice, Mercy spirituality has been an engaged spirituality. That is, the biblical and traditional concept of mercy and certainly its manifestation in the work of Catherine McCauley and the Sisters of Mercy is rooted in the unity of love of God and love of neighbor and the outward expression of that love in works of active care, advocacy, justice-seeking for and with one another, most often the suffering other, the vulnerable, the oppressed. So, mercy spirituality is, in this sense, an “engaged” spirituality.<sup>3</sup>

Of course, the concept of mercy in biblical and other classical sources addresses forgiveness of sin. In a Christian spirituality, it is rooted in the belief of God’s lavish offer of grace to frail humanity. That is certainly a foundation that carries into any contemporary Mercy spirituality – a profound

<sup>3</sup> For more on engaged spirituality, see Sallie B. King, *Socially Engaged Buddhism* (Dimensions of Asian Spirituality), (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009); and Joseph Nangle, *Engaged Spirituality: Faith Life in the Heart of the Empire*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Press, 2008.

awareness of being forgiven and resting in grace. That is the starting point. That is the foundation of our practice of forgiveness.

However, the biblical and theological tradition is also full of examples of a broader understanding of mercy, expressed as work of care and healing for the ill, work for justice for the oppressed, accompaniment and advocacy for the vulnerable and threatened, and so on.<sup>4</sup> Rooted in awareness of our own need for mercy with regard to our weaknesses and our suffering, faith that we are ever met with the mercy of God, and moving outward to share mercy with others in concrete, active engagement – this is the rhythm of and engaged Mercy spirituality.

We use as a resource for this reflection, the work of German political theologian Johann Baptist Metz. Metz is the founder of what he calls the New Political Theology. Together with protestant theologians Juergen Moltmann and Dorothee Soelle, in the mid 1960's in Germany, Metz felt deeply what he came to see as the scandalous silence of the contemporary theology of the time about concrete human suffering, and of course, in particular, in his context silence about the Shoa, silence about Auschwitz. Their audience, their own context, was, as they described it, a middle-class privatized Church, seeing Christianity as something that decorates the rites of passage of a comfortable life, but not as something that challenges our sense of ourselves and our relations to suffering others. They saw theology as interruption, as disturbing this privatized sense of Christianity as retreat from the world, as allowing the suffering of the other to interrupt this. So this political theology functioned as a challenge to first-world, Eurocentric privatized Christianity that seals itself off from engagement with concrete human suffering.

Metz came to assert that we can only do theology through the eyes of the other, through the eyes of the suffering other. He argued that theology is only abstract and useless if it is not itself an act of solidarity with the suffering other, especially those suffering politically, that is, the suffering that we cause each other through genocide, racism, mass violence, mass abject poverty, etc. He proposed that theology itself ought to be a praxis of solidarity for the suffering other, and he constructed a method for this theology based on the categories of memory, narrative, and solidarity.

For Metz, memory is the starting point. Because the stories of suffering are so easily erased by the victors, as he says. Because the memory of suffering is so easily ignored or the pain that arises out of it so easily anaesthetized in a first-world, privatized Christianity, the memory of the history of suffering is key to his thought. As a Christian theologian, he sees the Church as the bearer of the memory of the history of suffering, because it is the bearer of the memory of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus, which, he says, spurs the Church, i.e. the community of believers, ever to remember all histories of suffering. Mary Paula and I would add to this category of memory, the importance of the memories of struggle, hope, and healing. While Metz does not emphasize this—he wants to keep the focus on the formative effect of the memory of the history of suffering to break us out of our complacency—we feel that memories of hope and healing can be equally formative, and are just as essential for the praxis of mercy, as the memories of suffering.

For Metz, we do not come to understand profound truths of the faith or the profound experience of the other through dry academic writing, but rather through stories. Narrative puts us into a more

<sup>4</sup> For multiple biblical examples of this plurality of meanings, see Pope Francis, "*Misericordiae Vultus*: Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy," 11 April 2015, available at: [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/bulls/documents/papa-francesco\\_bolla\\_20150411\\_misericordiae-vultus.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/bulls/documents/papa-francesco_bolla_20150411_misericordiae-vultus.html). Accessed October 2, 2018.

direct, less abstract, and more immediate contact with the experience of the other.

The final category in Metz's method is solidarity, the active compassionate engagement for the suffering other. A key for all of this for Metz is: who is the human person? What makes me what I am? For him, this active solidarity on behalf of the other is formative of our human subjectivity. It forms and reforms us as persons fundamentally and constitutively connected with each other. It is a theological anthropology based on inter-subjectivity. Our own sense of subjectivity, that is, our own human freedom, agency, and ability to interpret our lives in light of God, is inter-subjective. Mine depends on yours. I don't get there without you. The realization of what it means to be fully human happens, for Metz, through the active engagement and struggle for the full humanity of all others. In an engaged Mercy spirituality, the practice of Mercy is solidarity understood this way. The practice of mercy fuses our own well-being and flourishing with the well-being and flourishing of all others, with focus on the most violated and vulnerable among us.

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