

Sisters of Charity Of Our Lady Mother of Mercy

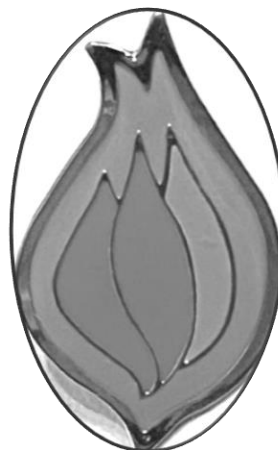


Connectedness

In the movement of mercy...



MM – Brazil – 1987



Barach – NL – 2001



Icone W. – NL – 2004



Friends – US – 2005



BV – NL – 2010



DM/FM – ID – 2018

COLOPHON

Final version:

General Council of SCMM

It was done with the collaboration of all groups.

(ICB) Vught, November 2025.

Congregation Sisters of Charity of Our Lady Mother of Mercy

Kloosterstraat 6-21 5038 VP Tilburg The Netherlands

T +31 (0)13 3039083 E generalate@sisterofcharity.nl | www.sistersofcharity.nl



Content

Foreword	6
Movement of Mercy and Associates.....	8
Barach.....	14
Icon Workshop.....	17
Friends / Associates	20
Beziëld Verband	24
Daughters of Mercy and Friends of the Mission.....	28
Charity in your name	32

Foreword

We recognize and support that some people are called to live the Gospel in the spirit of merciful love, in collaboration with our congregation. The general council wants to encourage an active policy regarding all possible forms of association and engagement in the congregation. In addition to professed members, the congregation also has associate members. The latter do not have voting rights and are not involved in financial matters.

General Statutes X-19.

Every person who believes in God has a unique spiritual calling. We serve God and others by living out the gifts He has given us. Living out this calling with faith, hope, and sincere love brings tremendous blessings to our lives, families, communities, and the world. Thus, it was fitting that one of the topics discussed at the 2023 General Chapter was how to foster connectedness within our congregation.

The General Council pays close attention to this matter. In this booklet, we will know about the various groups within our congregation. Each group has a different name and approach,

depending on the local traditions, cultures, and conditions. In the International Province, there are the Movement of Mercy and the Association. In the Dutch Region, there are the Beziëld Verband, Icon workshop and Barach. In the Indonesian Province, there are the Daughters of Mercy and Friends of the Mission.

These groups will continue to evolve according to the times and conditions in their respective locations. The members of these groups are individuals who consciously choose to participate in proclaiming the congregation's spirituality and charism in collaboration with the SCMM sisters. This aligns with the General Statutes of the congregation X-19.

Let us support our brothers and sisters who have joined or will join these groups, so that they may feel God's love and become messengers of the SCMM congregation's spirituality and charism within their families, communities, and wherever they may be.

Warm regards and prayers,

Sr. Sofiani Warasi

Sr. Elisângela Ferreira Belo

Sr. Amy Gitana

Sr. Miranda Situmorang



MOVEMENT OF MERCY AND ASSOCIATES BRAZIL

"Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (Lk 6:36) is Jesus' commandment to all of us!

As early as 1978, the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady Mother of Mercy of Brazil were reflecting on the possibility of lay people joining an association linked to the Congregation. A decade later, that possibility began to materialize in a very simple and spontaneous way, later taking on the name of the Movement of Mercy.

In 1987, in the city of Santa Rita, the young novice Ana Elias da Silva had to leave religious life to care for her elderly parents. No longer entering the Congregation, Ana asked to pray with the Sisters at the house on Tiradentes Street in Santa Rita. Thus, every Monday she was present for prayer, and after some time, she expressed her desire to take private vows. In agreement with the Sisters and to her joy, on Pentecost, May 14, 1989, after good preparation, her desire was fulfilled, and she has renewed her commitments annually ever since.



Seeing how fulfilled she was by her commitment; other people began to take an interest in her connection with the Congregation of the Sisters for a life and spirituality in union with the Sisters. The group grew, and other people followed Ana Elias' example. Thus, she should be considered the founder of the Movement of Mercy.

The beginning of the Movement, so simple and spontaneous, is reminiscent of the parable of the mustard seed, when Jesus says: "What shall we compare the Kingdom of God to? What parable shall we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest seed planted on the earth. However, once planted, it grows and becomes one of the largest plants, with branches so large that the birds of the sky can shelter in its shade" (Mark 4:30-32).

Starting in 1993, participants began to meet as a group every Monday. Normally, these people already had a good Christian life, were involved in some pastoral work, and participated in the Basic Ecclesial Community. The Movement served as a means of spiritual deepening, and many speak of how their lives have improved in terms of knowledge of the faith and dedication and service to the community. They also felt that they could give more love, understanding, and peace to each other within their families.

After the Sisters left Santa Rita, a small faithful group still continues to meet to strengthen their sisterhood. In other

places where the Sisters lived or passed through, people have always wanted to connect more with the charism of the Congregation. Thus, small groups began in Cabedelo, Bayeux, Várzea Nova, Heitel Santiago, and Ibó, all at their own pace, meeting two to three times a month. In total, there are 60 members, 10 of whom are men, with the majority being women and the average age being 50. These people are all Catholic and want to live the spirituality of the Congregation through the charism and mission of Mercy.

They express their commitment as follows:

I commit myself as a member of the Movement of Mercy, before God and you who are present here, to be faithful to the following commitment: to follow Jesus Christ by responding to the call of the needy and the poor.

To bear witness to merciful love as the Gospel shows us and according to the charism of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Mother of Mercy, doing so in our families, at work, in pastoral ministries, and among the people where we live.

And in their prayer, pray:

Dear Mother of Mercy, enlighten us inwardly with your spirit. May we radiate light, compassion, faith, and above all love in our lives and in the lives of others. Enrich our minds with your mercy.

Give us the courage and joy to bear witness to our vocation as members of the Mercy Movement of the Congregation of the

Sisters of Charity of the Mother of Mercy. Increase friendship and love among us. Amen.



There is a coordination team made up of two sisters appointed by the congregation, the group coordinator, and one member from each group. This team organizes the movement's journey, activities, and formation. However, in addition to the coordination team, all the sisters are involved in some way in accompanying the movement in the different communities where it exists. Every three years, elections are held to form a new coordination team.

The members of the Movement are a great support to the Sisters and the Sisters to them. There is a mutual process of sharing, in spirituality and service, which is very precious to all members. After three years of participation in the Movement, living according to its guidelines, they can make their commitments. In 2000, they decided that the anniversary of

the Movement of Mercy should be January 30 and that on that day, everyone would make or renew their commitments. All groups also meet four times a year: two formation meetings, a retreat, a meeting for evaluation, planning, and recreation, and the renewal of commitments.

The Movement of Mercy is not a mass movement; one must feel called, attracted by the charisma and spirituality of the congregation. Thus, the entry of new members varies from year to year, but there are always new people joining and keeping the group dynamically active.

At the Provincial Chapter in 2013, for the first time, there was more effective participation by representatives of the Movement.

In its desire to stimulate new forms of connection, the SCMM congregation in Brazil became open to the possibility of welcoming people who want to live the charism of mercy in a spirit of simplicity and compassionate love.

Inspired by the merciful God, revealed in his fullness in the Gospel, some people feel called and respond positively to the calls of God, society and the Church and choose to live the charism of God's merciful love as an associate member of the congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady Mother of Mercy.

Becoming a full member of the congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady Mother of Mercy requires a lot of discernment. There is a great desire for the charism of the

congregation to be spread and kept alive and active, in addition to the presence of sisters. As a result, people of goodwill who express a legitimate desire to join the congregation can become members of the congregation.

In order to become an associate of the congregation, a person must have been a member of the mercy movement for more than three years.

The Constitutions of the Sisters of Charity should be the most important guide in formulating the rules that guide the life of an associate of the Congregation. On November 25, 2017, the congregation officially accepted the first group of associates, composed of 11 people.

The great desire of the sisters and members of the movement and associates is that, even in the absence of the sisters, the groups remain strong and persevering, for they are the continuity and extension of the congregation, its charisma, and spirituality wherever they may be.





BARACH NETHERLANDS

“The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.” (Numbers 6:24-26).

The Barach group began as a result of the friendship between six sisters and people in society, which led to a request to organize reflection meetings. In 2000, this was presented, and in 2001, it was started under the name Barach, which means blessing in Hebrew. Blessing in the sense of a greeting, a gesture, a hand on the shoulder, or a word of encouragement. This blessing is mutual and means to say: I count on you, just as you can count on me. I wish you all the best.

In 2026, we will celebrate our 25th anniversary.

There are eight thematic meetings on Wednesday evenings, prepared by one or two members of the group.

During the meetings, there are between 6 and 20 participants. Almost all of them are women. There is always a sharing of life experiences related to the theme. In the past, the Sisters of Charity also held inspiring thematic meetings, to which they invited allies.



Photo: the group in early days

The members/visitors of Barach are mainly from Tilburg and the surrounding area, have spiritual interests, feel strongly connected in some way to the works of mercy, and are touched by the atmosphere of the monastery. They want to take a moment to reflect on a theme during the celebration. We are involved in social organizations in the city and, with

our Easter action, we support the Leergeld Foundation with clothing vouchers for children from "Van Tilly" (formerly called Tante Pollewop).

People of other faiths are more than welcome. Most members have a broader spiritual awareness, without committing to any specific religion in a practical way.

Initially, six sisters were involved with the group, but currently, there are two sisters committed to accompanying and developing the group. The group depends entirely on the congregation. This includes hospitality during meetings in the chapel and meeting space, the website, and printing when necessary.



In 2029, when the current term of office of the regional administration expires, there will be only a very small group of sisters left in the Dutch region. That will also be the time to end this activity.



ICON WORKSHOP NETHERLANDS

“God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.” (Genesis 1:31a).

Sister Delian and Sister Veerle founded the studio in 2004. Until 2011, it was located in the Mother House; from 2011 to 2022, in Klooster Nieuwenhof, in Moergestel; and then again in Tilburg, but this time with half the capacity (six students).

After Sr. Delian's passing, Sr. Veerle continued to organize courses and began teaching six students at a time with the help of two course leaders. The course is taught over five days (once a week), from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sr. Delian taught a course for children once a year.

Course participants come from all over the Netherlands and abroad. Demand exceeds supply. People seek the craft technique linked to spirituality. Icon painting is also a form of meditation. By 2025, 483 people and 54 children had been trained.

People of other religions are more than welcome. Many students initially come for the technique, but through the course they awaken spiritually. Many people who have taken a course once want to return. Not only to improve their technique, but especially for the atmosphere and peace it brings them. Return days are also organized for experienced painters to learn from each other, be inspired, consult the library, and enjoy the atmosphere.



Initially, two sisters were involved in the studio's activities, but now there is one sister who deals with theological interpretation and organization. For the courses, there are always two lay people who are course leaders for technology. The maximum capacity is six participants per course.

[illegible]



FRIENDS / ASSOCIATES USA

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, because everything I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. (John 15:15).

The group of Friends (now Associates) began after a meeting in Rome in the early 2000s. We were asked what gave us life. We replied, "We are supported by our friends, and we were not alone on this journey. We knew they were with us." In 2005, our friends were invited to a pre-chapter meeting to talk about our connections. During that meeting, the friends mentioned that they wanted to make a statement specifying their promise to us. They began to call themselves Friends (with a capital F). In 2011, a ritual took place in which the Friends declared their support and loyalty, and the SCMM Sisters also made a statement.

They expressed their commitment as follows:

“We are united in our love and support for the Sisters of the United States Province and want you to be assured of our intention to continue our journey with you into the future. We will support you and be your companions during declining health and end-of-life care as those needs arise. We are blessed to be on this journey together with you.”

And the sisters declared:

“We, the Sisters of the United States Province, are united in our love and support for you, our Friends. We feel that your presence is a gift from God. You truly enrich our lives and our experience of Merciful Love. We appreciate your companionship. We wish to stand with you as we move forward together into the future, sharing our lives, our charism, and our resources. We prioritize and invest in our relationship with you, our friends. We are truly blessed to be on this journey together.”

Friends were invited to each annual provincial assembly and also gathered in smaller groups throughout the year for more informal gatherings, celebrations, faith sharing, and discussions on community topics. Barbara Connell shared books on the history of the congregation. Friends participated in discussions about how we were connected to the congregation. The Sisters and Friends built a relationship in which they respected and supported each other in their ministries, in prayer, and in lasting, trusting relationships. As

congregational issues arose over the years, the Sisters and Friends discussed them together.



Friends also participated in several international meetings of the congregation (ICC and ICB) in Rome and the Netherlands. Recently, a friend/associate participated in the first chapter of the International Province in Brazil.

Currently, the 5 Sisters from the US and the 5 Associates (all women and all Catholic) remain involved. The average age of the Sisters and Associates is 81.

We have several Zoom meetings throughout the year and an annual in-person assembly of US members. We have been and expect to continue to be the same members, with no new additions.

In June 2025, the Friends renewed their commitments not only to the community in the United States but to the congregation as a whole, thus becoming known as

Associates. The Associates are all financially independent and do not ask the congregation for money. They are consulted when the SCMM Sisters make financial donations to other organizations, but the Sisters make the final decisions.



When there are no longer any Sisters in the US, the Associates will be free to relate to each other and to the international province and congregation as they wish at that time. (Since they are the same age as the Sisters, except for one younger member, we anticipate that their energy will also be depleted.) Currently, they participate in International Province meetings with other Associates from Brazil when invited.



BEZIËLD VERBAND NETHERLANDS

“I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.” (John 10:10).

The Beziëld Verband group arose from the need for sisters and lay people to gather around the fundamental values of the congregation and talk to each other about the meaning of these values in the lives of each: sisters and lay people, based on equality. One from the position of a sister and the other from outside the convent. It all started in September 2010.

The occasion was that the sisters felt the need to share their spiritual heritage, as they were retired and their connection with society was diminishing. The then Dutch Provincial Council and the General Council held discussions about connection and association. After two years of reflection and discussion, we founded the Beziëld Verband. At the time, there were more sisters than non-sisters involved.

Over the years, this ratio has changed, so that now there are more non-sisters than sisters involved. Very slowly, the sisters are leaving the Beziold Verband so that later (when the sisters are no longer able) it can continue as an independent group.

In addition to women, men have started to participate in the conversation, which participants consider positive. Currently, there are 25 members, of whom 3 are men. In terms of age, women and men vary widely between 35 and 85 years old.

The religious background of the members is diverse. Although most members have a Christian background, it should be noted in this context that the core values of the sisters are central to the Beziold Verband meetings. These guide the meetings but are influenced by the diverse religious backgrounds of the participants.

Spirituality is not only found in monasteries. Spirituality is within people themselves. The members of the Beziold Verband feel represented by the fundamental values of the congregation: mercy, simplicity, and divine providence. At each meeting, we feel the hospitality and experience the sisterhood.

We talk among ourselves about all kinds of topics that are closely related to the spirituality of the sisters and, at the same time, fit into the everyday lives of the members of the Beziold Verband. The sisters enjoy being connected to the outside world in this way through the Beziold Verband, and the non-sisters use the conversations to draw on the sisters'

experiences for a greater purpose: to make the world a pleasant place to live, starting in their own small environment.

The group meets five times a year, on a Saturday morning. Most of the non-sisters come from outside Tilburg. Although we only meet five times, there is an atmosphere of friendship, openness, and commitment. Everyone listens to each other. It is a matter of getting to know, recognizing, and accepting each other.

The celebrations at the end of the meetings are a moment of rest, and the texts give us food for thought. We always end with a shared meal, after which everyone returns home inspired by each other.

All participants pay €5 (if possible) for coffee/tea and the meal. We also distribute flowers at each meeting to someone who deserves them and send Christmas and birthday cards.

The group's leadership consists of (currently) one sister and five members. This group prepares the meetings in terms of content and organization. It has grown this way, but our dream is to change this and make each member responsible in some way. It is a constant group. Occasionally, a new member joins us and feels included quickly and easily.

We realize that the composition of our group will change in the future due to the age of the participants. This is certainly a major concern. To keep the connection with the Sisters of Charity and the history of their mission strong and current, it would be good to connect with other provinces of the

Congregation. A substantial connection can be established so that we do not lose touch with the Congregation. In this way, we hope to nurture our spirituality on an ongoing basis.





DAUGHTERS OF MERCY AND FRIENDS OF THE MISSION INDONESIA

*The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear? The Lord is the
stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be
afraid? (Psalm 27)*

The group began after the Provincial Chapter of Indonesia in 1997. At that time, the General Statutes of the SCMM X-19 Congregation were discussed. *"We recognize and support that certain people are called to live the Gospel in a spirit of loving compassion, in cooperation with our congregation. The General Council supports an active policy for various forms of membership and affiliation."* Thus, during the period of the Provincial Council from 1997 to 2001, Council member Sr. Rosalina Kusnohardjono was appointed coordinator of the group that would soon begin.

Sister Rosalina Kusnohardjono began drafting the rules of life for the Daughters of Mercy and tried to attract candidates

to the congregation. She also asked another member of the provincial council, Sister Blandina Zagoto, for help. Sr. Blandina Zagoto sought information about an association of sisters that had been formed by another congregation, the Ursuline Congregation in Jakarta, called the Daughters of St. Angela, whose president at the time was Mrs. Lana (former financial auditor of SCMM Province of Indonesia). In addition, Sr. Rosalina asked Sr. Petronella Lie to get involved in drafting the statutes of the Daughters of Mercy.

During the Provincial Council period from 1997 to 2001, members began to emerge: lay women and former members of SCMM, but this was not sustainable.

At the Indonesian Chapter from July 7 to 12, 2018, it was decided that the Provincial Council should organize the formation of friends of the Mission among lay people interested in living the Spirituality, Vision, and Mission of SCMM and who would support the spiritual life, vocations, works, and finances of SCMM as a Congregation. Friends of the Mission must be known to the community and authorized by the provincial council.

The Daughters of Mercy - SCMM are a group of mature, faithful, and independent lay women who are widowed and who, by special grace, are called to live the Spirituality of Mercy in their families, workplaces, and wherever they are.

Friends of the Mission is a group composed of lay people, Catholics and non-Catholics, both women and men, faithful and independent, with special talents, called to live the

Spirituality of Mary, Mother of Mercy, and to support the spiritual life, vocation, work, and finances of SCMM.



This group serves the needs of the community and society. They are involved in the joys and sorrows of the SCMM; when one of our sisters passes away, they are present and contribute to the funeral fund; also, when there is a celebration, they are invited and involved and contribute to the celebration.

They help as legal advisors; the Friends of the Mission were members in the compilation of the PADR (Protection of Vulnerable Children and Adults) guide, contributing with work, spiritual and financial opinions if there are activities in the province.

They play a role in expressing and engaging in the personal church as well as in the community. They are involved in categorical groups in the church. They provide financial assistance to students and schools in need in our work.

They are reference persons for junior sisters on the topic "A lay person's view of consecrated religious life (priests/nuns), especially SCMM."

Some of the sisters involved:

- Sister Blandina Zagoto (contact person for the Provincial Council), Sister Bernadette Chandra, Sister Kornelia Manao, Sister Carolina Daeli, and Sister Clara Minggu.
- Daughters of Mercy: one (1) person,
- Friends of the Mission: 8 people. 6 members are Catholic and 2 are Buddhist. The average age is 45 years.

What unites us is the Charism and Spirituality of Mercy. All are financially independent.

So far, the vocation to be an SCMM nun in Indonesia will still exist for at least 50 years, so the possibility of there being no more sisters is not yet being considered.

It would be very good to have contact with people from other groups, from other countries; it would be an opportunity to share, encourage, and support each other.

We, the Daughters of Mercy and Friends of the Mission, walk together with the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady Mother of Mercy in Indonesia for the mission of healing the divisions of the world with the spirit of mercy, sharing experiences together as lay people who proclaim the spirituality of mercy in the family, in the workplace, and everywhere (church and society).

CHARITY IN YOUR NAME – Charles van Leeuwen

TWO OR THREE

Now you know why the Sisters of Charity are there: what we believe, what we do. Few know all this, and we knowingly make it this way: for we want to spend our time on charity and not on our name.

We need not win the world over and build a reputation. Why seek renown for work that prospers better in silence? It is not our aim to please people: God's blessing is enough for us.

Yet despite our will to work in modesty and quiet, now and then we must emerge from the dark and make ourselves known: the work we do, the community we form and the love within us require that.

But how far ought we go to make our work more widely known, how much publicity can we allow? Will it bring encounter or distance, inspiration or disbelief?

How do we invoke, when making a film or writing a booklet, that spark of desire for you to know us not only by sight, but share our lives perhaps for a while and feel involved?

How do we make our name heard, let its embedded love shine, reveal the sister within us and appeal to the sister in you without becoming insincere?

How can we do all this without doing injustice to what we are and stand for? Without saying or promising too much without betraying, disguising the word without pushing our desire too far?

Let not our name be one of great expectations, but of small things we do each day; not of a great past but the courage to start again, no matter how small, even today.

Let not our name be one of bygone days but a new beginning: love that is rekindled today hope that is awakened today faith that still has power to thrive and bring about something new.

Let charity be our name the charity of two or three sisters who gather in God's name charity that dares invite a guest to every empty seat, and a friend or stranger to every empty room.