

Mitchell Rock

First, I would like to thank everyone for coming today for this memorable event in dedication to our Sister of Mercy, Catherine McCauley. I'm honored to have been asked to share my thoughts on the importance of this symbol, as I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to spend time with and learn from the Sister's of Mercy in Dublin, Ireland 3 years ago. A handful of students from Misericordia were selected to participate with our Sister Schools in coming to learn about the critical concerns of the sisters of mercy, our school heritage, and how to become more effective leaders in our communities. Most of my group who created the framework for this dedication have since graduated, but they were excited to hear that the plan has officially been put into action, and they send their blessings.

I had started the journey to Baggot street knowing precious little about both the group I was traveling with or Catherine McCauley, but returned home with great new friends and newfound admiration for Misericordia. I found that I was not alone in my ignorance of Catherine's accomplishments, and my naivety was shared with most of the student's arriving to this National Conference. The sisters welcomed us with open arms, teaching us about the organization and leading workshops on how to tackle some of the most pressing problems in society.

We discussed the critical concerns of the Sister's of Mercy, having in-depth panel discussions on how they work to passionately eliminate poverty, the widespread denial of human rights, the degradation of the earth, the increase in violence and racism, the continued oppression of women, the abuse of children, the mistreatment of immigrants and the lack of solidarity among people. This resonated with me as a student, because Misericordia works toward these ideals through creating a community based on our Charism's of mercy, service, justice, and hospitality.

The most impressive experience was the tomb of Catherine McCauley located in the middle of a beautiful and expansive garden of yellow roses. This was the spot where the sisters came to pray, reflect, and calm themselves from the trials of the day. We spent as much time as we could in that garden with the limited time we had on Baggot Street.

So in an effort to bring back the teachings of the sisters and inspire Misericordia students to carry out Catherine's mission of mercy, we came up with an idea to create our own miniature replica of the garden we so adored back in Dublin. We hope that this space will grow into a place where students can come to escape the stresses of college life, reflect on what it means to carry out Catherine's mission, and learn about the great works of a woman who made it possible to be a proud Misericordia Cougar.