

President Thomas J. Botzman, Ph.D.:

Good morning. We are so fortunate to have so many of you here today to celebrate the arrival of Catherine McAuley to our campus. Please join me in thanking our donors, our Mercy Associates, the Sisters of Mercy, and our campus community for making this day possible.

I was asked to say a few words today, but have been at somewhat of a loss to what I can personally add to this wonderful celebration.

A former long-time resident of Mercy Center, who wasn't a Mercy Sister and who moved from Mercy Center about two years ago and recently settled into a new home, gave me inspiration and the words about Catherine that echo the thoughts I have heard from the Sisters of Mercy.

To begin, I would like to read to you from a letter written to Catherine McAuley.

6 November 2019

My dear Catherine,

Welcome to Misericordia University! Although I only arrived recently, it is quite clear that this is a campus captured by charisma, the divine gifts we have received, and that all is well with the students and those who carry on the good works in this wonderful community. I am quite sure you will enjoy seeing them as they travel about the campus and Mercy Center. Thank you so much for inviting me to be a part of your grand celebration. I shall observe quietly from a distance, but do know I am with you.

Our good friend Albino Luciani wrote a letter to me and had some very nice things to say. He wrote, and I quote, "This is the Teresa of practical life, who experiences our same difficulties and knows how to overcome them deftly; who knows how to laugh and make others laugh; who moves through the world and the most various vicissitudes with ease, thanks to her abundant natural talents, but more because of her constant union with God." Honestly, my dear Catherine, I must admit he may be mixing the two of us up, as his words describe you most perfectly.

I hope we can speak with each other often, and to all those who are in our learning community. Though our beloved Misericordia University is almost one hundred years old, we certainly continue to have our occasional difficulties and new challenges in these modern days. But we shall get it done. As I said many years ago, "Teresa alone is worth nothing; Teresa and a penny are worth less than nothing; Teresa, a penny, and God can do anything." I know you've done so much for so many, especially the women and children, and will continue to do so.

Moreover, I must add a word of caution, based on my beliefs and observations accumulated over hundreds of years, "For the love of God, take care what you do! Never believe the nuns, because if they want something, they try every possible means." I'm so pleased you heard and followed the calling as the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy. I trust our friends and colleagues at Misericordia University will continue to try every possible means to serve those in need, following to perfection the lead of Mother Teresa Walsh and your beloved Sisters of Mercy.

My dear Catherine, we are now fixed permanently as ongoing symbols of the living and ongoing dreams of the Sisters of Mercy in founding College Misericordia. As a walking nun, you may find that somewhat difficult. I do recall that at your passing you requested that your shoes be burned in recognition that your work as a walking Sister of Mercy was now complete. Please do remember my words, "Christ has no body now but mine. He prays in me, works in me, looks through my eyes, speaks through my words, works through my hands, walks with my feet and loves with my heart." Please understand that while our days of walking may be over, we do get to witness the steps taken by all who are welcomed here as they live the charisms of Mercy, Service, Justice, and Hospitality.

Enjoy each day at this place, this Misericordia, this Heart of Mercy. It is my hope that those who pass by will stop and share their dreams with you and on occasion join the Sisters for a good cup of tea.

Yours in Mercy,

Teresa Sanchez de Cepeda y Ahumada

As you may realize, the Catherine McAuley statue has arrived within the past week. Catherine joins St. Teresa of Avila, for whom Villa St. Teresa was named, honoring our foundress Mother Teresa Walsh's patron saint. Teresa's statue, which was on the grounds of Mercy Center for many years, was damaged in a storm in a few years ago. After extensive and successful repairs, Teresa's statue arrived a few months ago and now stands, in a new home, near the entrance between Mercy Hall and McAuley Hall, just around the corner.