The background is a soft, watercolor-style wash of colors, primarily pinks, purples, and yellows, with scattered autumn leaves in various colors (red, orange, yellow, green, purple) and small dark speckles. The overall effect is gentle and artistic.

ECHOES OF
Mercy

A COLLECTION OF POEMS FROM SALVE REGINA UNIVERSITY

ECHOES OF
Mercy

A POETRY ANTHOLOGY BY THE
SALVE REGINA UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY
2015

FOREWORD

by Sister Leona Misto, RSM

Vice President Mission Integration

The Mission of Salve Regina University calls us to “work for a world that is harmonious, just and merciful”. *Echoes of Mercy* illuminates the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy as essential components of a Mercy sponsored university. Created by members of the Salve community, the collection highlights Mercy as an ideal, experience or practice.

Mercy echoes throughout the publication. Each poem’s powerful word images portray thoughtful reflections and shine creative light on the concept of Mercy.

I thank Dr. Troy T. Catterson for initiating and mentoring this project and his student team for their collaboration and participation. I also express sincere thanks to all who submitted an entry.

INTRODUCTION

by Dr. Troy Catterson

Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy

Poetry sings the songs of the heart with the hymns of the head. It attempts to integrate all aspects of the self into a single vision of human reality. Thus, it perfectly expresses the essence of the Catholic intellectual tradition. Nowhere is this marriage of heart and head more necessary than in Catholic social teaching. If mercy stays at the level of mere feeling, divorced from the intellectual insight needed to transform it into a rational plan of action, it quickly degenerates into a blind and impotent sentimentalism. If justice stays perched in the realm of abstract rationality, devoid of the loving compassion needed to spur it into action, it languishes in a state of empty legalism. Just as “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,” (John 1:14) so also poetry gives flesh to our words, lends reason a body. It is no coincidence that the voice of the prophet in the scriptures is the word of the poet.

Such was the thinking that impelled me to approach Sister Leona Misto, vice-president of mission integration, with this nebulous idea for a poetry anthology. Sister Leona quickly saw to the heart of the matter and came up with a practical plan to bring this idea to fruition. Without her invaluable support and timely insights, this idea would have remained a stillborn flight of philosophic fancy. I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to Lauren Boyle, Brandon Harrington, and Leah Palazzo, the students who formed the editorial board. Their hard work in choosing the poems for admission into the anthology truly made this a corporate work of the entire Salve community. Finally, I would like to thank Paula Telford, our graphic designer. Her artistic sensibilities and creativity have transformed the physical layout of this anthology into a work of art in its own right.

MERCY

by Carol Anderheggen

Weep for the child
who never grew.

There but for
the Grace of God
go you.



POVERTY

by Cory Betz

Is poverty something we can truly fix?
Or are we too busy obsessing over the new
Iphone six?

There are people with no food, water, or homes.
There are also people who have had every single one of
Apple's iPhones.

Twenty-two thousand children in poverty today will die,
While we're too worried on where to find the nearest
Wi-Fi.

If this isn't enough proof,
Just ask Siri,
She'll tell you the truth.

THE WHITE VEIL

by Monica Blanco

As I walked across the park the other day,
I saw a couple sitting
Underneath the shade of an oak tree,
And I thought the image
Of an angel
Was the light from the sun
Casted between the branches
and the leaves
and the intimacy between
their glances.
It reminded me
Of a dream I once had
Where I lifted the white veil
that said
mercy carries its gesture
in the smallest
of movements.

I AM A HUMAN

by Alexa Bracco

I am a navigator
I steer my ship
The wind blows, I drift off course
I look to the sky for direction

I look to the North
Forward and forth
To the stars
And I pray

I am a student
I live and I learn
The ground trembles, I lose my footing
I look to others for guidance

I look to others
My sisters and brothers
To my teachers
And I listen with intent



I am an athlete
I run and contend
My body is tired
And it fails me

I look to my team
And remember the dream
Of coming in first
I stand up, I'm revived

I am a human,
I deal with what God has given me.
Sometimes I fall down.
But God always lifts me up.

MERCY

by Mary Cain

We hear about many merciful acts;
The stories where the hungry are fed,
the naked are clothed and the homeless are sheltered.

We hear about many merciful leaders;
The people who advise, console, comfort,
and forgive their neighbors.

We have the opportunities to act in such ways,
and lead a merciful life,
But do we?

If more people were merciful,
we can create a healthier and safer environment.

We can't let it depend on other people,
let it start with you.

Be forgiving, show kindness, have compassion,
and the mercy will become contagious.

A FORBEARING SOLUTION

by Benjamin Campbell

It's not a matter of what we believe in
Nor is it the color of our face
But for a moment let us all consider
The Earth and its current place

At a time where we should all come together
We seem to always disperse
A world that should be united
Has befallen a hindering curse

But what will bring everyone closer?
Something that we can surely ration
It does not have to be a hefty donation
Just show a little compassion

ODE TO MOTHER MERCY

by Christopher Caron

Mercy makes us human, brings to earth,
Mercy is not guaranteed, but those who grant mercy also
receive mercy.

Does the saying “Mother of Mercy” reflect how a mother is
the ultimate giver of mercy?

When her children cry, does she not comfort them?
After they disobey she can punish her child, but never
stay mad.

You have protected me, comforted me, cared for me.
You have yelled at me, disciplined me, grounded me, but
have always shown mercy.

When a mother gets old and cannot take care of herself,
The roles reverse and her children must show the mercy
she once showed to them.

A mother of mercy is divine.

GIVE ME A FACE

by Troy T. Catterson

Give me passion! No warm cup of pity
that doles its duty out like rented loves
and pays its dues in grudging little shoves:
paper promise stamped by cold committee.

I want action! No commercial ditty
with sing-song stars releasing story doves
to CG skies from hands in scented gloves,
thinking words could raise the Holy City.

For long before your conscience felt my pricks,
cold's pins and needles pierced my waking sleep,
and hunger speared my gut with scrawny sticks,
impaled my soul to roast like skewered meat.

So come and feel the crush of Want's embrace;
your gaping pain alone gives me a face.



MERCY IS BLISS

by Ryan M. Ciocco

We are quick to aim down a sight,
Rather than gain some insight.
We are here, perpetually ready for a fight.
Our days are filled with war,
And only a privileged few say “No more”.
There can never ever be an even score.
We do lack mercy – always in a battle.
We see how many chains we can rattle.
We witness horror, but we get right back on the saddle.

Where can we find mercy?
Where is it?
The ultimate compassion – mercy.
This is reality – don't quit.
The ultimate truth – mercy.
Work for it – don't just sit.
The ultimate fulfillment – mercy.
Strive for justice – don't submit
The ultimate love – mercy.
Don't end up within an abyss.
You will see – mercy is bliss.

Spirituality aside, mercy must be within.
Is it not natural? We want to forgive sin.
Let go of all that is ad hominem.
Look past your neighbor's iniquity.
See their suffering – oh what a pity!
See your own beauty – don't try to be "pretty".
Mercy starts with you.
And you must see what you can do.
Even the simplest act of compassion is incredible; this is true!

Where can we find mercy?
Where is it?
The ultimate compassion – mercy.
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You will see – mercy is bliss.

HOW TWO EIGHT-YEAR-OLD BOYS SAY GOODBYE

by Denise Dimarzio

Their mothers prompt them, nudge them forward,
out of courtesy, good manners, out of genuine feeling
because they know the greater knowing
of what lies restless and rustling in the cardboard boxes,
some in the truck, most still clinging to the edges
of the emptying rooms.

Their mothers, simply women now
listen transfixed to the whispering boxes,
the many ghosts shimmering, shifting and seeming
to rise from the objects within, giving off
scent and shape and should have been,
the lasting remains of I used to know.

So, they step together, these boys,
fierce in their slim bodies and baby voices,
the downiest chicks crowing out futures
that even their mothers cannot know.

They step together, clamping their milk teeth,
clasping hands, wrestling their grubby hands
backwards and forwards, both yelling
out into the echoing rooms

say mercy, say mercy.

WORDS THAT LABEL

by Mackenzie Donald

Homeless, dropout, lazy bum
Where did these hateful words come from?
These words that label and define
Like homelessness is such a crime
Like they choose this life
Like they choose this path
Like they wanted to receive our nation's wrath?
Or were they born into the world this way?
Never to catch a break not a single day
Struggling from childhood until now
Wanting a way out but never knowing how
Let us show some mercy
Let us show some love
Because we are all neighbors to our Lord above!



ABBA

by Lois Eveleth

Abba.

Daddy.

Enveloping, besotted love.

Justice? No, not justice. Not that. Please.

You know your family. Us. We're family.

Look away from what we deserve, away from the dark, the self-absorbed, the unfeeling.

Forgive. Always, that brushing away, that making trivial even of what deserves justice.

Make it all clean and new again.

And maybe, sometime, on some great and shining day, some remarkable, astonishing hour,

We'll be like you.

We'll be enveloping, besotted love.

Just maybe.

Abba



HELPING OUR NEIGHBORS

by MaryKate Fallotico

With helping our neighbors;
Comes a satisfying comfort

Sheltering the homeless;
Gives a sense of support

Feeding the hungry;
Can bring joy to an unfortunate family

Visiting the sick and imprisoned;
Can give advice to the people who need it

Giving alms to the poor;
Can give them hope for a brighter future

Clothe the naked;
Can bring warmth to their hearts

A proper burial
Can help them forgive the people who suffered

With helping our neighbors;
Comes a satisfying comfort

MERCY HAIKU

by Joseph Farrar

It means to be good,
Make sure you are respectful
And do as you should.

Can be found in God,
As one of his attributes,
Do not commit fraud.

Just be good firstly,
And be the best you can be,
That's known as Mercy.



THE MERCY OF GOD

by Kerry Farrea

You must go
You must speak
To the ignorant and weak
You must go, you must find this:
Those who can see, but close their eyes in blindness
You must go into a world of trouble times and show
them kindness
You're the one that has to go
To the corrupted fields and make them grow
You have to navigate a boat
Without a rudder or sails
You have to suffer on a cross
Your hands and feet driven with nails
A crown of thorns your head must bear
And your mother's eye shall shed a tear
But I will be there all time through
I shall stand right next to you
And when you carry the cross
Made from the hard wooden tree
I shall be there, never fear
I shall not have forsaken thee.

SISTERS OF MERCY

by Jonathan Felteau

We Sisters feed the hungry, we shelter one and all,
We give food to the poor, and help them when they fall,
We clothe the ones who are naked, we visit the dying
and dead,
We give comfort to all, including the sick in bed,
We Sisters bear wrongs patiently, and help give comfort to
those who fall,
We are the Sisters of Mercy, may God bless one and all.



THE MEANING OF MERCY

by Samantha Gisonni

Have mercy they said
I must have been three
I sat in church and listened to the adults speak
They would plead, have mercy on us
Lord, please have mercy
Mercy, I thought
I didn't know the meaning
Mercy?
Why are they begging?
Is God mean?
I never asked
What does Mercy mean?
Neighbors, brothers, sisters
What do we all need
Kindness, compassion, goodness of heart
Is that what mercy means?
Ask for mercy, but not from God
We need mercy, from you and me
Ask humans to be human beings

COMFORT

by Nicole Grosser

To the lost souls,
You have strayed
Away from human reach
God hears your prayers
God will reach for you

To the lost souls,
We will comfort you
Until you feel comforted
We will forgive your past
God will forgive you

To the lost souls,
We will instruct you
Until you are back under God's wing
God will accept you



MERCY

by Emma Gruber

People around the world
suffer, hurt, grieve, and ache
they are hungry, homeless, sick, and poor.

We lead a life of mercy
to help, aid, comfort, and console
many discouraged and disheartened souls.

We perform acts of selflessness:
provide food to the hungry,
find homes for the homeless and
comfort the poor.

MERCY

by Nicholas Henebery

Mercy is the work to help the people in need,
To help others we must stop everyone's greed.
We are called to help our neighbors with material things,
As well as helping them spiritually.
We were not put on this earth to be blind of deprivation,
But we are called to encourage other's aspirations.
The more mercy we show to one another,
The better life we will give to our fellow brothers.



THE GREATEST OF THESE

by Deborah Herz

there are those
who would show
kindness to a prune,
Virginia Woolf
once wrote
in a room of her own.

so i turn on the light
over the sink
and open the door
to let the moths in.

you look at me
as though i had
three heads
an anthropomorphic error
with an oversized heart

but all the priests
and ancient Greeks
were wrong
about the seven virtues –

prudence, justice, temperance, courage
faith, hope and love –
they missed one
the greatest of these:
mercy.

JOINED IN MERCY

by Karyn Jones

He shares the sorrows of the world.

He grieves human arrogance and apathy.

He hurts for us.

He died for us, and arose in spirit to show the way.

Forgiveness, compassion, love, patience, joy and laughter;

He gave us these freely, with no expectation of demand
for reward.

His life exemplified the meeting of souls—

Faith in God's plan for each and all of us.

We are not apart from one another or our Lord.

When we are joined in mercy.

We do not feel alone or bereft,

When we are immersed in His mercy.

We do not turn our backs on each other,

When we believe and are constant in our inner knowing

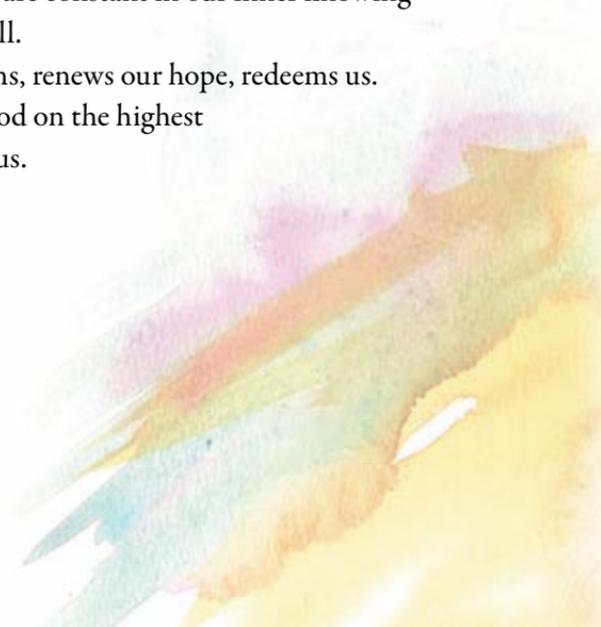
That, indeed, all is well.

Mercy cleanses our sins, renews our hope, redeems us.

Merci: gratitude to God on the highest

Merci: thank you, Jesus.

Mercy.



WHAT IS MERCY

by Kelsey Kriner

Now what is mercy?
Mercy means so many words,
All come from the heart.



MERCY

by Evan Lerner

To forgive when you are in a position to punish.
Tolerant when you could fault others.
Accept instead of deny.
Sympathy.

Thankful when you could be jealous.
Kind to all, deserving or not.
Loving and caring for all.
Compassion.



THE TRAVELING BLANKET

by Peggy Ludwig

I met Amy the second day when I started at
Looking Upwards,
She taught me how to loom knit and how to make
blankets, hats, scarves, and socks,
The blankets were made of different materials,
The blankets were either thin or thick,
Amy encouraged me and inspired me with her friendship
to help develop my skill,
In turn I wanted to make other blankets for family, friends
and people in need.
We gave of ourselves and shared our hearts,
We inspired people with the gifts and the magnificence of
the blanket or project.
Amy and my mom showed me compassion,
My mom and my caseworkers helped me roll my balls,
We were there for someone by our friendship,
We showed grace and kindness and humility.

UPON ASCENDING
INTO THE WORLD TRADE CENTER

from the subway, early Spring, 2000

by Karina Lutz

Standing stock still as people streamed every way
around her, expertly parting as little as possible
like she was a mere rock in a river.
Could she be weeping?

She had trained in from the suburbs for the first time
to this city of dangers told by radio.
All around her, moving fast: strange
faces, different colors, different voices,
languages she had never heard before.

She rubbed her pockets in a downward motion.
Did she find herself weeping?!?

A tissue offered
by a black hand.
She looked up into a round face,
surrounded by a orange and blue head wrap,
the darkest skin she'd ever seen,
blackier eyes, kind as any:

“Welcome to New York”.

BE MERCIFUL
by Amanda Marini

Give alms to the poor

Be merciful

Bury the dead

Be merciful

Visit the sick and imprisoned

Be merciful

Clothe the naked

Be merciful

Shelter the homeless

Be merciful

Feed the hungry

Be merciful

MERCY

by Michael Marotta

Is it a kind phrase or simply a word?
Is it universal or does it stem from the Lord?
Some say it is a gesture or more often an act,
But all it takes is a simple pact.
Between you and yourself the covenant is made,
A willingness to help others shall never fade.
A showing of kindness no matter the cost,
For without mercy the meaning of life is lost.



GIVE MERCY

by Leona Misto

I was alone and afraid
And I felt God's hand.
I was sorrowful and lost
And I heard Jesus's words.

Do you hear her plea for help?
Give her your hand and whatever she needs.
Can you feel his despair?
Comfort him with your compassion.

We have received Mercy so many times
Give Mercy over and over again.



SEEKING MERCY

by Joshua Morales

I've done too many things wrong in this life
I've failed too many times to count
What can I do to make this right
What could possibly be the amount

I hear them say to listen and seek
But it seems I've been too far way
I drop to my knees too tired and weak
Could you please come and meet me half way

Mercy is what I am seeking this day
For I see no other way out
Please tell me Lord what price do I pay
Do I plead or scream or shout

In the end it's love and mercy You give
As I finally catch my breath
When You whisper "child you are mine to forgive"
I know I've got a lot of life

A SINGLE HAND

by Courtney Moulton

A lonely person feeling down
Always being bullied and hurt
Trying so hard not to frown
Making an attempt not to convert

Anyone can see the wrong
in bullying someone who's not the same
Anyone can step up and be strong
and not play in that game

It takes one person as a friend
to make one feel not so alone
just a single hand to extend
and a smile may be shown

SMILE AMONG SADNESS

by Danielle Niebuhr

I print out my boarding pass
Not for London
Not for Paris
Not for Hawaii
But for Camden New Jersey

I reach my destination
I see despair
I see barefoot kids running
Watch out for needles
Watch out for armed men
A home consists of moving day boxes
Stolen shopping carts
Dumpsters
Highway overpasses
Park benches

I am at a soup kitchen
Surrounded by bologna and mustard
Sandwich after sandwich
I hand them to the destitute
I meet a man with a shopping cart
I hand him the sandwich
He smiles
A big smile
And for the first time
I smile

IN THE RAIN

by Raine Oesterle

In the rain is in fact restrained.
Due apologies to the Bard,
But when my opponents don't play hard,
My gut reaction is disdain.

A victor won't abet enemy weakness:
Coaches see unearned kindness as my mistake
And that's a risk I won't take.
Until with blackened eye I cry out in meekness.

For tables turn when victor turns to injured.
When my marred visage turns one gaze to personal distress.
Trampled and mourning I hear His voice undressed,
Imploring mercy's Salve for sport perjured.

He came to all games and saw my wins and losses.
In spirit present and in thought so pure,
He beckons calm and kindness for a player now demur,
And I lay still as His hand crosses

Over to her hand suddenly held in firm affection,
Seeking to right me from my low folly.
Hurt and in doubt and certainly not jolly,
My eye looks to her help and can't abide rejection.

Thank you, opponent, for your friendly lift.
Mercy you show after I offered none.
I'll hug you in silence with game now done,
And pay you back with prayers long adrift.

I've learned graciousness when a match is won.
Sportsmanship calls for charitable easing;
We can stop our effort at play's ceasing
And give the defeated their chance for fun.

MERCY

by Michael Pagliarini

Battered and bruised from the hurt I have caused
What to do, where to go with a life all alone
I fear I have lost my way on this dark path
Where is the light to guide me home?

Approaching a dead end forged from my own woes
I understand my actions and have accepted my fate
Yet I strangely feel one's welcoming touch
With no one in sight the path begins to illuminate.

A feeling of warmth and love consumes me
There is mercy in the air
At last I am free and have found my way
It must have been a sign from the man upstairs.

CATHERINE

by John Rok

There once was a Catherine in Dublin

Who felt Mercy best shown by one's action

She proffered her funds

Then called "walking nuns"

To teach, nurse, serve all with compassion

POEM FOR MARY, OUR MOTHER

by Emily Sarsfield

Mary, Mary,
Oh What A Beautiful Lady,
She is an Inspiration to the Catholic Community,
And a Sign of Ultimate Unity.

She is Our Savior's Mother,
Her Life Has Given Inspiration to One After Another,
She is Glorious like a Warm Day in the Summer,
She Has Shown Mercy to More Than Anyone Will Ever
Discover.

Oh Mary Teach Me Your Ways,
Until One Day I See Your Face,
The Most Selfless Woman in the Human Race,
Please Shine On Earth Your Selfless Grace.

GOD'S BLANKET

by Connor Sullivan

When life is dark,
and its thorns prick at you.
When life is dark,
and its branches are gnarled around your throat.
Remember,
God's blanket never ceases to warm the earth.
If you believe...
If you are willing to talk to him...
Then all darkness will turn to light.

FORGIVE

by Angelina Todaro

Forgive me father,
Forgive me mother,
For I have failed you yet again.

The lion escaped from its bars,
Steam pierced through its teapot spout.
You have taught me better.

Forgive me father,
Forgive me mother,
You do not deserve the desperate tears.



The heavy falls of water, its turbulent raptures,
The spiteful bite of boiling water,
You have taught me better.

Forgive me father,
Forgive me mother,
For I ask for your hand.
I ask for your mercy.

MERCY

by Katie Travers

The rain poured down as the wind whipped through
the trees

A skinny puppy sat in the street, covered in fleas

A car door slammed shut

And a man in a suit cursed at the mutt

He walked to his house, where dinner scents filled the air

He turned his back on the dog because he just didn't care

His young daughter was waiting for him at the door

She wrapped her arms around him as soon as his shoes
hit the floor

Before the front door was closed and locked for the night

The pitiful puppy came into sight

Despite her father's protests, she ran into the street

She brought the puppy into the house and gave him
a chicken treat



The father looked at his daughter and the puppy in
her arms
He was ashamed at himself for not taking the puppy out
of harm

Ten years later, the car was all packed
And the girl pulled down the street, ready for the
collegiate track

Before she left, she kissed her dad goodbye
Then she kissed her dog and tried not to cry.

HUMAN

by Olivia Wilson

Human.

Your existence is as real as mine.

Your mistakes are as made as mine are;
some, however, more lasting than others.

Yet you are equally as valuable as I am.

So don't just forgive me;

find it within yourself

to understand you deserve peace

too.



AS A COMMUNITY THAT
WELCOMES PEOPLE OF ALL BELIEFS,
SALVE REGINA UNIVERSITY,
a Catholic institution founded by the
SISTERS OF MERCY, seeks wisdom and
promotes universal justice.

THE UNIVERSITY THROUGH TEACHING AND RESEARCH
prepares men and women for responsible lives by
imparting and expanding knowledge, developing
skills, and cultivating enduring values. Through
liberal arts and professional programs, students
develop their abilities for thinking clearly and
creatively, enhance their capacity for sound
judgment, and prepare for the challenge of
learning throughout their lives.

In keeping with the
traditions of the Sisters
of Mercy, and recognizing
that all people are stewards
of God's creation, the
University encourages
students to work for a
world that is harmonious,
just, and merciful.



MISSION of
SALVE
REGINA
UNIVERSITY



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