

**Mercy is** (Sr. Mary Wickham, RSM)

Mercy is a woman of indeterminate age  
and unremarkable appearance.  
She is not fussy about the company she keeps,  
and tends to be full of excuses for her friends,  
having seen life from their angle.  
Her heart, like her pockets, is capacious.  
She has a voice rich in tender understanding  
But is at her best in silence  
when she sits alongside  
the grief-stricken and the guilty  
and their sorrow seeps into her soul.  
Curiously, she sees herself reflected  
in the eyes of both murderer and victim,  
so sits not in judgement but companionably.  
She is a subtle teacher.  
She makes strong cups of tea, cup after cup.  
Her hands are worn by work  
but eagerly sought by the dying.  
Her feet are calloused from long roads  
trudged with refugee and beggar.  
She is an endurer of all horrors.  
Mercy has a face wrinkled by kindness  
and worn by the cost of living,  
but even in hovels she has been given to laughter  
and awareness of simple pleasures.  
She has a store of lore and wisdom  
but is never heard to complain  
that she's heard any story  
a hundred times before,  
believing each teller to be  
entitled to a hearing as if to the one and only.  
Mercy is a lady comfortable to be with-  
the safest and soundest-  
blessed in her being  
with the indisputable reality  
that she is true daughter,  
in manner and in mind,  
of the maker of the universe.