

Preparation

For this time of prayer and reflection, you will need a large candle arranged in a 'sacred space'; a CD player and a suitable hymn to begin such as *God Beyond All Names* (Bernadette Farrell on album *God Beyond All Names*) or *Creator God* (Margaret Rizza on album *River of Peace*) and the words of the *Suscipe* to conclude.

Decide who will be

Leader

Candle lighter

Reader of Gospel

Reader of Prayers of Intercession

**FOUNDATION OF
INSTITUTE OF SISTERS OF MERCY OF
AUSTRALIA AND PAPUA NEW GUINEA**



PRAYER AT HOME
December 18, 2011

Leader

We gather in the name of our loving God who has guided and sustained us over these past years as we pondered and prayed about our future as Sisters of Mercy in Australia and Papua New Guinea.



(candle is lit)

Now, with joy and gratitude, we celebrate the new unity that is ours as members of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea.

We pray that we will continue to experience God's love, to be guided by God's wisdom and to be strengthened by God's humility.

And so we sing:
God Beyond All Names or Creator God
(or another suitable hymn).



Leader

In union with our sisters who are participating in the Foundation Eucharist in Sydney, we contemplate God's word to us.

Reader

A Reading from the Holy Gospel According to Luke

(Luke 1: 26-38)

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.' She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.'

Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?' 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you' the angel answered 'and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God.'

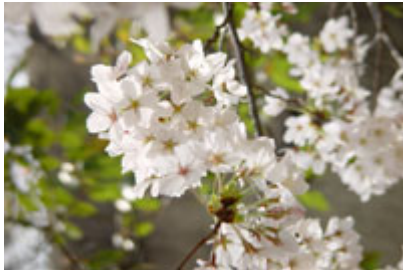
'I am the handmaid of the Lord', said Mary 'let what you have said be done to me.' And the angel left her.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you Lord, Jesus Christ.

Pause for a few minutes to receive God's word. If you would like to share a word or a phrase of this reading that appeals to you, this is the space to do so.

Or you might want to offer an insight into what this Gospel passage means for you and the Sisters of Mercy this day.



Prayers Of Intercession

Leader

Knowing that God's mercy is for all people of every time and place, let us pray with confidence

Reader

For our Holy Father, Pope Benedict, and all in the Church who minister to God's people through word, sacraments and works of mercy – that they will be graced with the wisdom and compassion to help those in their care as Jesus would. We pray ~

God in your love and mercy, hear our prayer

For people everywhere who are oppressed by poverty, illness, ignorance or violence - that these sacred days of Advent will bring them God's gifts of freedom, healing and hope. We pray ~

God in your love and mercy, hear our prayer

For Sisters of Mercy throughout the world – that as we keep our hearts centred in God we will continue to mature the tradition of religious life which Venerable Catherine McAuley entrusted to us for the sake of those who long for God's mercy. We pray~

God in your love and mercy, hear our prayer

For all who belong to the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea - that our new communion will flourish in ways that Catherine herself would desire, and that through our prayer and ministries and our sharing of resources with works of education, health and aged care, and community services we will strengthen our participation in God's redemptive mission. We pray ~

God in your love and mercy, hear our prayer

For women and men who are inspired by Catherine McAuley's life of service to the most vulnerable, her steadfast commitment to Christ and the Church and her love for Mary, the Woman of Mercy - that they will always have a special care for the ones in need of that justice which Jesus demonstrated. We pray ~

God in your love and mercy, hear our prayer

For all who seek God - that they will recognise God's genius as they ponder the mysteries of the universe, experience God's nearness as they care for the earth, and feel God's creative love through the kindness of good people. We pray ~

God in your love and mercy, hear our prayer

For our loved ones who have died - that they will enjoy fullness of eternal life among the Communion of Saints. We pray

God in your love and mercy, hear our prayer

(You may have other prayers

Leader

We thank you for receiving all our prayers, Faithful God, and we trust that you will answer them through Christ Our Lord. Amen

And together let us sing Catherine's Suscipe

Leader

As we conclude, we pray for God's blessing

(pause)

May God bless and animate us with his own divine spirit. Amen

May we prove it is Jesus Christ
we love and serve with our whole hearts. Amen

May God count us among his dearest and best beloved. Amen