

MERCY WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

This has been prepared by Mary Duffy RSM (Melbourne), Vice-Postulator in the Oceania region for Catherine McAuley's canonisation cause.

INTRODUCTION

As we gather to celebrate our Foundation Day, we recall the ***spirit of readiness*** with which Catherine and her first companions set out on their journey of Mercy in December 1831.

The journey of Advent invites us **to be ready** as we *prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord* (Isaiah 40:3).

And, at this time as we continue our journey towards reconfiguring, we pray for each other that the ***spirit of readiness*** may deepen within our hearts and lives.

OPENING MUSIC

Selections may be made from **Handel's Messiah** or from hymns with an **Advent theme**.

PRAYER

God of Mercy, we gather today in gratitude and love as we celebrate the foundation of the Sisters of Mercy in 1831. We thank you for the gift of Catherine McAuley, whose courage and compassion reached out to all in need. Inspired by her vision, may we respond to the needs of our time in a spirit of readiness and trust. We ask this grace through Jesus our Saviour, Amen.

READINGS

Exodus 3:2-6

The angel appeared to Moses in the shape of a flame of fire, coming from the middle of a bush. Moses looked; there was the bush blazing but it was not being burnt up. "I must go and look at this strange sight", Moses said, "and see why the bush is not burnt." Now God saw him go forward to look, and called to him from the middle of the bush. "Moses, Moses", he said. "Here I am", he answered. "Come no nearer", he said. "Take off your shoes, for the place on which you stand is holy ground".

The Call of Moses

The Moses in my heart trembles
not quite willing
to accept the prophet hidden in my being
wondering
how much it will cost
to allow the prophet to emerge.

O child of unnecessary shoes
cast them off
and stand in readiness
on this awfully holy ground!

For the Egypt in people's hearts
demands that you see the burning bushes
all around you
aflake
and burning wildly
calling you forth
away from the comfort
of well-protected feet.

The ground you stand on is holy!
Take off your shoes
believe in your Moses and go.

(author unknown)

Isaiah 35:3

Strengthen all weary hands,
steady all trembling knees
and say to all faint hearts,
"Courage! Do not be afraid."

Isaiah 54:2-3

Widen the space of your tent,
stretch out your hangings freely,
lengthen your ropes, make your pegs firm;
for you will burst out to right and to left.
Your race will take possession of the nations
and people the abandoned cities.

Luke 1:39 - 42

Mary set out at that time and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went in to Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Catherine McAuley

We who began were prepared to do whatever was recommended, and in September 1830 we went with dear Sister Harley to George's Hill to serve a novitiate for the purpose of firmly establishing it. In December 1831 we returned and the progress has gone on as you know.

(Letter to M Elizabeth Moore, January 13th, 1839)

TIME OF REFLECTION

Whether praying alone or with a group, you are invited to spend a time of significant silence, as you reflect on one or more readings.

OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE

You may wish to share some personal response to the readings.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Sophia, Source of Wisdom, today we are united in prayer with Sisters of Mercy throughout the world, mindful of our call to follow you in the spirit of Catherine McAuley. We pray for her Cause for Canonisation and ask a share in her courage and compassion.

O God, grant us your wisdom

As we search for ways to comfort those who are lonely and afraid, we pray

O God, grant us your wisdom

As we search for ways to be peace and mercy in our fragile world, we pray

O God, grant us your wisdom

As we acknowledge our leaders who generously collaborate to discern directions for the future, we pray

O God, grant us your wisdom

As we discover the richness of your truth revealed in the many religions of our world, we pray

O God, grant us your wisdom

As we take responsibility for planet Earth and unite in caring stewardship, we pray

O God, grant us your wisdom

As we continue the journey of reconfiguring *which God's mercy and Catherine's vision demand*, we pray

O God, grant us your wisdom

As we await your Word in readiness and silence, we pray

O God, grant us your wisdom

Let us pray:

O Wisdom, we pray for discerning hearts that the mysteries of God's love may be revealed in us and through us. As we wait in stillness for the coming of our Saviour, keep our hearts open and ready to receive the Word of life. We ask this through Jesus, the long awaited One, Amen.

BLESSING

May your Spirit rest upon us with counsel and understanding AMEN

May your Spirit rest upon us with mercy and compassion AMEN

May your Spirit rest upon us with justice and faithfulness AMEN

CLOSING HYMN

The choice of any Mercy hymn would be appropriate to close this time of prayer.

(Prayers of Intercession and the Blessing are adapted from the
Morning and Evening Prayer of the Sisters of Mercy)