

---

# Commissioning Ritual

---



Image: [Erica Nilsson](#)

*22 February, 2019*



INSTITUTE OF  
*SISTERS of MERCY*  
OF AUSTRALIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA

## Acknowledgment of Country

For the land and its First Peoples we acknowledge the living culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples, the traditional custodians of the land and waters. *(You may like to name your local custodians).*

**ALL:** We recognize their deep feelings of attachment and relationship to country. We pay respects to the elders past, present and emerging. We honour the traditions with which they have gifted this place and commit ourselves to walking together in a spirit of reconciliation, made tangible in acts of justice.

### Introduction:

As we begin a new year, it is time to reflect on the many ways we receive and give mercy. This commissioning ritual is one way of acknowledging the richness of God's mercy and our willingness to be that mercy in the world.

---

*(Please omit the following if you are watching this video outside the official live broadcast time.)*

We gather to recognize and celebrate that we are integral to the mission of God's mercy.

We now invite Eveline, Caroline, Liz, Gaye and Maureen to come forward.

*(The candles of Eveline, Caroline, Liz and Gaye from the Chapter candle are lit.)*



**ILT:** We welcome Maureen Sexton to the Institute Leadership Team – with gratitude.

**ALL:** We assure you of our trust, respect and support. *(Eveline lights Maureen's candle from the Chapter candle)*

**Eveline:** Maureen, we welcome you. There is a piece of light in all of us. One single candle lights a small space.

**Maureen:** Each lone light makes us stronger when we all stand together.

**ALL:** God's transforming mercy fires our hearts anew.

---

**ALL:** Compassionate God, you have been faithful to your people in every time and place. You have invited us in to the heart of your mercy that we might be transformed and walk with others as they discover your mercy in their hearts. From the dream of Catherine McAuley, inspired by the life of Jesus, may we be bearers of light to the children, women and men in our time as mercifully as Catherine did in her time.

**READER:** Let us listen to and reflect on the Word of God from the Gospel of Matthew:

“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” Matt 5:14-16 (NIV)

The Word of God.   **R:** Thanks be to God

**Response: Christ be our Light** (chorus only)

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.

Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in your church gathered today.

**READER:** Let us listen to the inspiration we receive from Joyce Rupp's 'A Piece of Light'.

## **A Piece of Light** - Joyce Rupp

There is a piece of light in all of us,  
easily seen in the wise Thomas Berry  
longing to heal the wounds of our planet,  
in Dorothy Day who embraced the poor,  
and Mahatma Gandhi, fighting for peace  
with the weapon of nonviolence.

There is a piece of light in all of us,  
the grandmothers and grandfathers,  
children orphaned by AIDS and war,  
the feeble, the lame, the disheartened,  
the successful as well as the searcher.

There is a piece of light in all of us,  
maybe hidden or buried with pain,  
perhaps pushed in the corner by shame.

It is there in the arrogant, the hateful,  
racists, torturers, and abusers,  
and ones who are willing to kill.

Seen or unseen, the light is there,  
ready to kindle, eager to expand,  
refusing to be tightly contained.

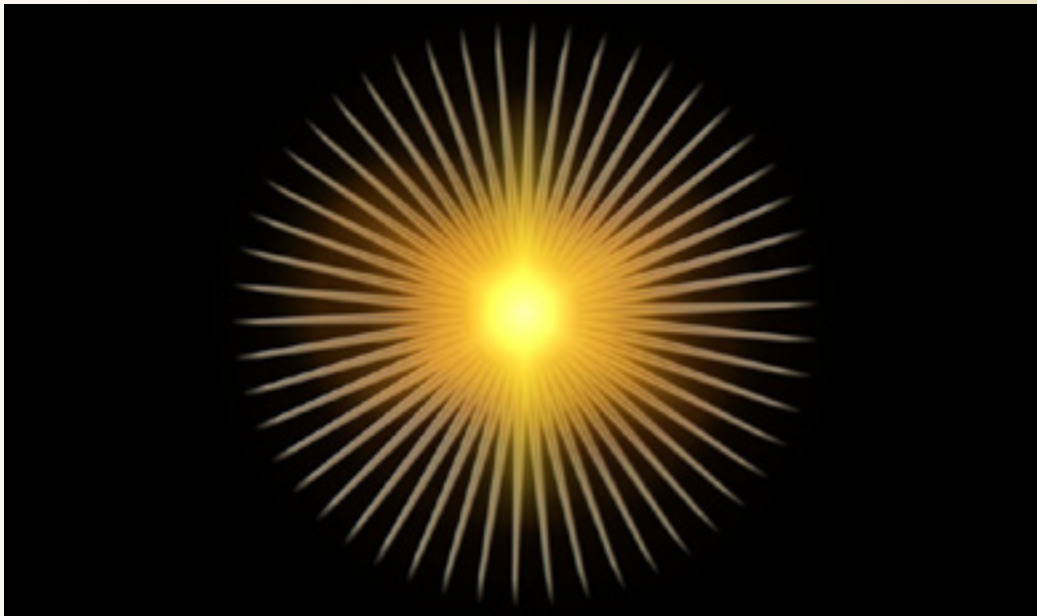
As soon as the tiniest space is allowed  
it quickly emerges, floods outward,  
illuminating the darkest of places.



One single candle lights a little  
dark space.

Many candles light a world full  
of people  
desperately in need of each  
other's glow.

Each lone light makes us  
stronger  
when we all stand together.



**READER:** “God’s mercy is from age to age [Lk1:50]... Our charism comes to us through those women who continued the search for that same true spirit of mercy. In their faith-filled service they, too, found mercy.” (Const 1.05)

We are grateful for these founding women who, faithful to their baptismal commitment, followed Catherine, offering light to those around them. Despite their fear and misgivings, they placed their trust in God alone:

**Let us name these women, acknowledging both their baptismal and religious names:**

<b>PERTH</b>	Mother Ursula Frayne (Clara)
<b>MELBOURNE</b>	Mother Ursula Frayne (Clara)
<b>GOULBURN</b>	Mother Mary Ignatius Murphy (Frances Anne)
<b>BRISBANE</b>	Mother Vincent Whitty (Ellen)
<b>NORTH SYDNEY</b>	Mother Ignatius McQuoin (Elizabeth)
<b>BATHURST</b>	Mother Ignatius Croke (Margaret)



Ursula Frayne RSM

<b>ROCKHAMPTON</b>	Mother de Sales Gorry RSM (Jane)
<b>SINGLETON</b>	Mother Stanislaus Kenny RSM (Mary Anne)
<b>TOWNSVILLE</b>	Mother Benigna Desmond RSM (Anna Maria)
<b>GUNNEDAH</b>	Mother Aloysius O'Driscoll RSM (Bidelia)
<b>ADELAIDE</b>	Mother Evangelista Fitzpatrick RSM (Christina)
<b>GRAFTON</b>	Mother Stanislaus Simson RSM (Elizabeth)
<b>BALLARAT EAST</b>	Mother Agnes Graham RSM (Charlotte)
<b>PARRAMATTA</b>	Mother Clare Dunphy RSM (Catherine)
<b>CAIRNS</b>	Mother de Sales Meagher RSM (Margaret)
<b>WEST PERTH</b>	Mother Berchmans Deane RSM (Minnie)
<b>WILCANNIA-FORBES</b>	Mother Ursula Huggard RSM; Mother Bridget Hilley RSM; Mother Paul Fielding RSM (Eliza); Mother Josephine Callen RSM (Ann)
<b>PAPUA NEW GUINEA</b>	Mother Elizabeth Miller RSM (Nance); Mother Francis Regis Everingham RSM (Alma); Mother Frances Harcombe RSM; Sr Helen O'Brien RSM.

**ALL:** For all those who have given light to our path, we give you thanks.



---

*Optional – please adapt to local circumstances.*

*Participants are invited to anoint each other's hands, using the following words:*

**(Name), be a light to the world by offering hope and compassion to those around you.**

---

**READER:** Inspired by the Word of God and in the biblical tradition of faithful women through the ages, we hear your invitation in our lives:

1. Will you call on the faith of Moses' mother, recognizing God's call to let go of what we love?

**ALL: Yes, we will. We trust that God will guide our reed baskets to safety.**

2. Will you call on the strength of Esther, who was willing to speak truth to power?

**ALL: Yes, we will. May we know that it is for such a time as this that we are called to live among your people.**

3. Will you commit to being as honest as the woman at the well, who was willing to ask questions and to answer in truth?



**ALL:** Yes, we will. Give us courage to leave our water jars by the well and be moved to share the news of creation with all whom we meet.

4. Will you be inspired by the courage of Mary, mother of Jesus, who put aside her fears, worries and doubts to live with boldness into the life God was dreaming for her?

**ALL:** Yes, we will. May we, like Mary, be open to hear the call in our own lives.

**READER:** Let us be open to the challenge placed before us in the words of our Chapter Statement:

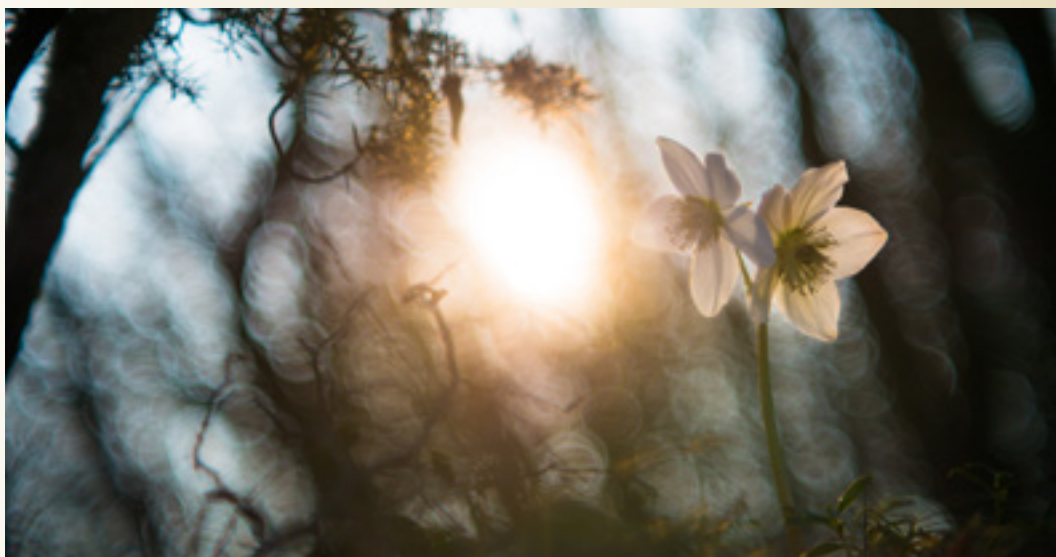
**CLOSING PRAYER:** (together)

**READER 1**

At this time of global vulnerability  
God's transforming mercy  
fires our hearts anew with  
deeper reverence for all  
creation.  
Disturbed by  
the despair and suffering of many  
people  
and the degradation of Earth,  
we are impelled to reflective  
action  
for gospel justice.

**READER 2**

Long dispela taim bilong wol i gat  
hevi na wari  
marimari bilong God i senisim  
hat bilong mipela olsem niupela  
paia  
wantaim bikpela ona long olgeta  
samting.  
Plenti ol pipol i tingting long pen  
na hevi i  
bagarapim ol na long ol bagarap ol  
i mekim  
long graun bilong mipela,  
dispela i kirapim mipela long lukluk  
gen  
long wei na stretpela pasin bilong  
gutnius.



Living and eternal God,

You call us out of darkness

to live as people of light.

We raise our voices

and lift our hearts

to reveal Your life-giving mercy and compassion.

May we continue to walk

in the path of Your light,

as we build Your kin-dom on earth.

We ask this in the name of Jesus the Christ, from whom all good things come.

Amen

### **BLESSING:**

May Christ surround us with love. Amen.

May Christ transform us in love. Amen

May Christ send us forth to proclaim God's love. Amen.

**HYMN:** <http://www.maristmusic.org.au/god-of-surprises/>

## A Fire on the Earth - Michael Herry FMS

I am sending you out in my name to all the world  
Travel lightly, taking only sandals and staff.

I am sending you out in my name to all the world.  
Be filled with Gospel fire, the light of the world.

Refrain:

Light a fire of the earth, a fire on the earth.  
Be seized by the love of God, a fire on the earth.  
Light a fire on the earth, a fire on the earth.  
Be the hands and feet of Christ to all the world.

By the pow'r of the Holy Spirit set your sails.  
Cast out deeply, fearing not the wind and waves.  
Live your lives in witness to me before the world.  
Take heart, for I am with you all your days. (Ref)

Be my light to all the world for all to see;  
Shine out brightly doing all for love of me.  
And rejoice when the road is rough and days are long.  
Take heart, for I'll be with you in your song. (Ref)

© Marist Music, 2008.

Used with permission under One Licence A-





INSTITUTE OF  
*SISTERS of MERCY*  
OF AUSTRALIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA