

## **Many Paths - One Mercy Charism**

Welcome to this month's Prayer and Reflection with the theme, *Many Paths*. As Mercy Associates we walk a path that is unique to each of us, yet as one with living our commitment to a life full of God's loving Mercy as expressed in the life of Venerable Catherine McAuley.

*Show me the right path, O Lord,  
Point out the road for me to follow.  
Lead me by your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me.  
Remember O Lord your tender care and your unfailing love.*

~ Psalm 25.

As the year unfolds before us, a year which looks to bring an easing of Covid restrictions, God gives us one chance after another to become new again, to allow things to grow in us, to birth ourselves afresh, to find and follow new ways towards the Holy.

**How do I feel? What fresh paths do I glimpse? Can I find a new place of peace and love?**



Acts 2:28

*You have made known to me the paths of life.  
You will make me full of gladness with your presence.*

John 10:27

*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*

**What resonates with you as you read the above Scripture verses and the Gospel reading here:**

Matthew 12:1-8

*Jesus took a walk one sabbath day through the cornfields. His disciples were hungry and began to pick ears of corn and eat them. The Pharisees noticed it and said to him, 'Look, your disciples are doing something that is forbidden on the sabbath.' But he said to them, 'Have you not read what David did when he and his followers were hungry – how he went into the house of God and how they ate the loaves of offering which neither he nor his followers were allowed to eat, but which were for the priests alone? Or again, have you not read in the Law that on the sabbath day the Temple priests break the sabbath without being blamed for it? Now here, I tell you, is something greater than the Temple. And if you had understood the meaning of the words: 'What I want is mercy, not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the blameless. For the Son of Man is master of the sabbath.'*



'Wheat field with Cypresses', painted by Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890), Painted in 1889, Oil on canvas.

## What Catherine Did

*Catherine was a Pioneer of Mercy, walking many paths in her life.*

Mercy was the motivating power underlying Catherine's love, and Mercy as "the principal path marked out by Jesus Christ for those who wish to follow his example" (Rule of Catherine's Congregation) is the principle path we take.

For Catherine, Mercy in the form of compassionate, practical response to need was where she believed she was called by God. This is the heart of Mercy.

- How do you see yourself living out the Charism of Mercy as shown by Catherine?
- Read the following Gospel passage and reflection, slowly and prayerfully

Matthew 7:21,24-27

*Jesus said to his disciples: It is not those who say to me, "Lord, Lord," who will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the person who does the will of my Father in heaven.*

*Therefore, everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a sensible man who built his house on rock. Rain came down, floods rose, gales blew and hurled themselves against that house, and it did not fall: it was founded on rock. But everyone who listens to these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a stupid man who built his house on sand. Rain came down, floods rose, gales blew and struck that house, and it fell; and what a fall it had!*



'McGrath Highway, painted by Gregory Thielker (born 1979), painted in 2006, Oil on canvas.

### Reflection

Rain came down, floods rose, gales blew ... plenty of warnings here to encourage us to build a rock solid prayer life and aim for great spiritual depth. This painting by Gregory Thielker (a hyperrealist painting) depicts a rainy landscape through the front windshield of a car. The rain distorts the view; the rain makes the landscape or the traffic hard to see. That's what storms do deep inside us: they twist things, they upset us, they blur things.

Jesus prompts us to be firm in our resolve and our faith, so that we can always see the road or path ahead. Prayer is the best protection offering stability in any storm we face.

### Closing Prayer

Create pathways dear Lord, for us to co-create  
peace  
justice  
compassion  
love  
mercy  
in the world, moving forward together  
as mercy associates and followers of your Way.



'Many Paths' a painting by Jodie Traugott.