

Mercy and Courage – Prayer and Reflection Resource

Carmel Ross, July 2022

As you begin, remember you are always in God's presence. Still yourself, so you can listen to the gentle voice of the Spirit.



Courage is not nearly so rare a quality as we sometimes like to think it is. ... The truth is that courage is what carries simple people through an average day. It is not an action; it is an attitude. It is the spiritual strength that gives direction in the midst of confusion. ... Courage is not an exceptional virtue. It is what makes the difference between a gracious and a noxious world. ... Courage does not come in a burst of insight. Courage comes out of the way we think and the way we live from Sunday to Sunday, every week of our lives. ... Courage is what you do when your heart is ready.

Joan Chittister, *Scarred by Struggle, Transformed by Hope*, 2003, Pp 50-51

Most of us need to find courage in our lives every day. Often in seemingly small things, sometimes big things. **Courage** isn't rare, it's how we respond when we know we need to act in a way consistent with our conscience and values, yet it's tough to do so.

When things are very difficult and challenging, do we turn to God to strengthen us? Ponder a situation you face now that requires courage. Invite God to bless you with courage to act according to your deepest values.

Courage is a heart word. The root of the word courage is cor - the Latin word for heart. In one of its earliest forms, the word courage meant "To speak one's mind by telling all one's heart." Over time, this definition has changed, and today, we typically associate courage with heroic and brave deeds. But in my opinion, this definition fails to recognize the inner strength and level of commitment required for us to actually speak honestly and openly about who we are and about our experiences - good and bad. Speaking from our hearts is what I think of as "ordinary courage."

Brene Brown

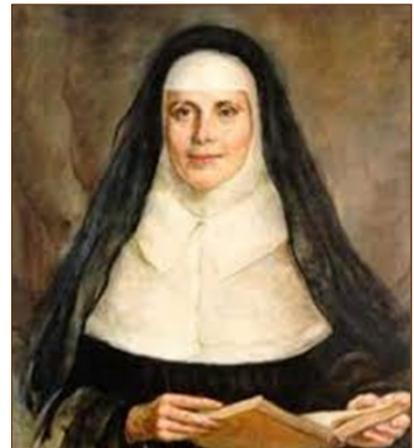
WWW.STOREMYPIC.COM

Catherine was courageous in developing innovative approaches in the works of mercy which are at the heart of the community's charism. She built her "house" next to one of the most fashionable new neighbourhoods in Dublin, which brought the poor into the same neighbourhood for education, for employment in the laundry which served the wealthy, and in bringing the plight of poor women and girls into the public eye. In the light of health conditions in the poor neighbourhoods where the sisters visited and cared for the sick/poor in their homes, she and the community were constantly at risk themselves of becoming ill. Death was a constant risk and reality to young and old alike in the new community which flourished, nonetheless.

'Take from My Heart All Painful Anxiety': Catherine's Courage - Janet Ruffing rsm,
<https://www.mercyworld.org/newsroom/take-from-my-heart-all-painful-anxiety-catherines-courage-janet-ruffing-rsm->

Living within intersecting circles of suffering, Catherine learned early to enclose within her own heart the sufferings of others and to feel the pain of others as her own pain. Year by year, event by event, she developed that **tender, courageous response** that brought forth from the heiress, the House of Mercy, and from the woman of faith, the Sisters of Mercy.

Joanna Regan RSM, *Tender Courage*, 1978, p. 3



In Catherine's life, courage was always evident. Can you draw inspiration from Catherine to guide you towards a tender, courageous response to the challenging circumstances in your life? If we can be still long enough, we can become alert to the grace God offers us...

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

John 14:27

May the God whose mercy is the force that reawakens us to new life and instils in us the courage to look to the future with hope, bless us and empower us to fill the world with God's justice and mercy. Amen.

Reflective Prayer: Creating Circles of Mercy,
Sandra Lupi rsm, Brisbane Sisters of Mercy
<https://www.mercyworld.org/f/45074/x/182268f87e/sandra-lupirm-reflective-prayer-creating-circles-culture-of-mercy-a4.pdf>