

BE AS SHINING LAMPS



Catherine: Portrait of Founding Women series; Artist Megan Seres has placed Catherine on an uphill path, gesturing towards sunrise on the horizon. Catherine is inviting us to boldly walk rough trails with steady footsteps as she did throughout her life. In the background of the painting are the green hills of Dublin and surrounds where Catherine grew up.

Opening Ritual

Facilitator or Prayer Leader. Light a candle and hold it while saying this prayer. (If in a group, pause after each sentence to allow the passing of the candle from one person to the next).

Pray (together):

We carry this candle in solidarity with First Nations peoples in this country and around the world.
We carry this candle in openness to truth-telling and acknowledgement of the unjust and cruel treatment of Australia's first people.

We carry this candle in love and compassion for those dispossessed,
those taken from their families as children, those abused and treated with derision.

We carry this candle for those who face racism on a daily basis.

We carry this candle in support of an indigenous voice that will enrich Australia.

Pause for a few moments to reflect on this prayer, and also the portrait of Catherine by Megan Seres.

(Prepared by Christine Convery, NSW Mercy Associates Network Facilitator)

Consider the following poems.

*What do they suggest about the Mercy journey into the future?
What concerns you about the road ahead?*

- **Once you step out, you will see for yourself**
how nothing could have made you
ready for this road
that will take you from what you know
to what you cannot perceive except,
perhaps, in your dreaming
or as it gives a glimpse in prayer.

(Extract from *Pilgrim: Poems by David Whyte* 2012. David Whyte)

- **We will not close the Door of Mercy.**
We will stand as keepers, attuned, disposed.
We will hold the door ajar
for the desperate and the disruptive, the stray, the strange,
the wounded wise and the child too soon old.
They are looking for the door,
waiting by the door, hoping for the door,
and we must, with them, and for them, keep faith.
We will not close the Door of Mercy.

(Extract from Mary Wickham rsm. 2021. *Being the Bird*. 183)

Scripture blessing: Jeremiah 17:7-8

But I will bless those
who put their trust in me.
They are like trees growing
near a stream and
sending out roots to the water.

They are not afraid
when hot weather comes,
because their leaves stay green;
they have no worries
when there is no rain;
they keep on bearing fruit.

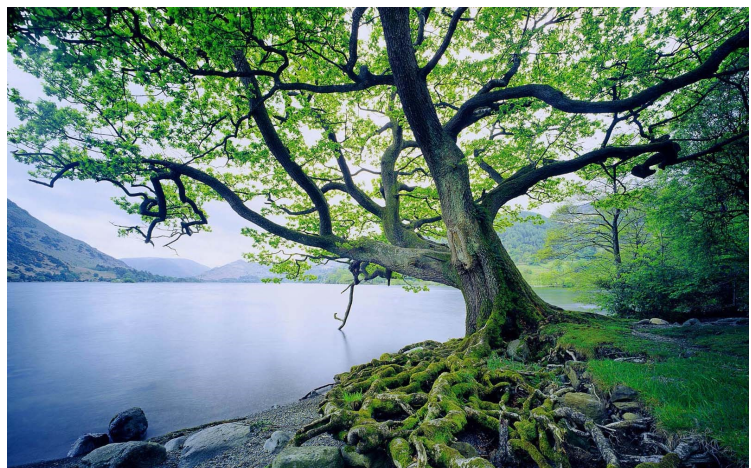


Image by Dina Haveric

Closing Prayer:

Catherine, you said to us: mercy is the principal path pointed out to us by Jesus Christ
Bless us with the Gospel vision to see and hear the call of the poor and oppressed, and the
courage to respond with mercy always. Amen.

(MIA adapted)