

Let Mercy be our Light and Hope

How quietly the great God does all His mighty works! Darkness is spread over us, and light breaks in again, and there is no noise of drawing curtains or closing shutters.

Limerick Manuscript, in Sullivan, Catherine McAuley and the Tradition of Mercy, p. 174

Introduction:

In this time of prayer we are invited to hear the promptings of the Holy Spirit as we listen to the cry from the hearts of First Nations people for Voice.

We are invited to consider: how are we to respond as followers of Jesus, women and men of mercy, and as a nation?

We are encouraged as we enter into this prayer by voices of faith:

Pope Francis: “We are called to discover Christ in the poor, to lend our voice to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to understand them and to welcome the mysterious wisdom that God wants to communicate to us through them.”

Catholic Social Teaching: The principle of subsidiarity holds that all people have a right to participate in decisions made about their lives and that decisions should be made by those closest to, and most affected by, the outcome.

Catherine McAuley: “The poor need help today, not next week.” Catherine’s sense of urgency stemmed from the harm she witnessed because of the lack of education, healthcare, and job opportunities.

Gathering Rite:

Acknowledge the Mercy

Connect and Share—As you gather take some time to greet each other and to share an experience that you can recall of the light of mercy breaking quietly into darkness.

Acknowledge Country

Today we acknowledge with humility and gratitude the traditional custodians of this land, Australia. May the great creator, Life-giver of us all, move now among us, that we may be set free to celebrate together the antiquity of this land and its First People, and to care for both in the future.

A Call to Prayer:

Light a candle, share silence and/or listen to the song: **Amazing Grace**

Amazing Grace sung in aboriginal language by Gurrumul is a beautiful version.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMONauja-O8&ab_channel=GeoffreyGurrumulYunupingu-Topic



Opening Prayer:

Gracious God,

May I hear your Voice as I reflect upon Holy Scripture.

May I hear your Voice from the mouths of the poor and excluded.

May I hear your Voice as your creation echoes your Voice.

May I hear your Voice as I attend to the still small Voice within me.

Give me, O Lord a humble and open heart to hear what your Voice is saying, and the courage to act. Amen.

From: https://institute.mercy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Easter_to_Pentecost_Discussion.pdf

Scripture: 1 Kings 19:11-12

Then the LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD. Behold, the LORD is about to pass by." And a great and mighty wind tore into the mountains and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake there was a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a still, small voice.

Take a minute or two of silence and open hearts, minds and will to listen prayerfully to the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART

We, gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, coming from all points of the southern sky, make this statement from the heart: Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent, and its adjacent islands and possessed it under our own laws and customs. This our ancestors did, according to the reckoning of our culture, from the Creation, according to the common law from 'time immemorial', and according to science more than 60,000 years ago. This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or 'mother nature', and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown. How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for sixty millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last two hundred years? With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood. Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future. These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This is the torment of our powerlessness. We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country. We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution. Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: the coming together after a struggle. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination. We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history. In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

Speak briefly: "What are you hearing today as you listen?
And, How are we to respond as followers of Jesus, and people of Mercy?"

Closing: *Poem of Hope*

God of Hope and Mercy, Inspire us, your church here on earth, to proclaim the gospel of your love in the death and resurrection of your Son. May all people hear the call to carry hope and display your mercy and compassion to all.

The Poem is read.

*We go with courage to act in peace and light.
Amen.*



A Song Of Hope BY OODGEROO NOONUCCAL

Look up, my people,
The dawn is breaking,
The world is waking
To a new bright day,
When none defame us,
No restriction tame us,
Nor colour shame us,
Nor sneer dismay.

Now brood no more
On the years behind you,
The hope assigned you
Shall the past replace,
When a juster justice
Grown wise and stronger
Points the bone no longer
At a darker race.

So long we waited
Bound and frustrated,
Till hate be hated
And caste deposed;
Now light shall guide us,
No goal denied us,
And all doors open
That long were closed.

See plain the promise,
Dark freedom-lover!
Night's nearly over,
And though long the climb,
New rights will greet us,
New mateship meet us,
And joy complete us
In our new Dream Time.

To our fathers' fathers
The pain, the sorrow;
To our children's children
The glad tomorrow.

