

Surrendering to God

Back in late 2017, not long after I took up the role of Mercy Associates Network Facilitator (Victoria), I was invited to a Commitment Ceremony held by the Ballarat Mercy Associates. Two new members joined, and others renewed their commitments to the life of mercy. At the close of this joyous occasion, everyone joined together in singing Catherine's *Suscipe*, the prayer set to music by Elaine Deasey rsm. The song is familiar to me now, so that I no longer always pause to notice its meaning, but hearing it for the first time then, I was deeply moved by Catherine's sincerity and courage. As her words poured forth centuries after they were written, in a chapel far from the place where she began her ministry among the poor of her day, I imagined all the good that has come from Catherine's initial desire and commitment, and from all the many acts of surrender by those who have followed in her footsteps.

I wonder how often you have prayed Catherine's *Suscipe*, or sung the song, with your Mercy Associates community? Have you paused to consider, as I do, what it really means to be "Yours for time and eternity", and to cast ourselves "entirely" into the arms of God's loving Providence?

The ultimate model of surrender is, of course, Jesus himself. The Gospels paint a vivid picture of Jesus' inner struggle as he faced his death on the cross, and the love that made surrender possible:



Matthew 26:36-40

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me." And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me, yet not what I want but what you want."

Few of us are called to make such a sacrifice, but I wonder how you experience "surrender" in daily life?

What is your experience of surrendering to God?

What gives you courage in these acts of surrender, large and small?

"I reach out my hand to God that God may carry me along as a feather is borne weightlessly by the wind..."
Hildegard of Bingen (*Scivias*, 1152)

Down the centuries, mystics like Hildegard have heard the call to surrender to God. Julian of Norwich famously wrote:

In this little thing I saw three truths. The first is that God made it; the second is that God loves it; and the third is that God sustains it”.

“God showed me too the pleasure it gives him when a simple soul comes to him, openly, sincerely and genuinely. It seems to me as I ponder this revelation that when the Holy Spirit touches the soul it longs for God rather like this; ‘God, of your goodness give me yourself, for you are sufficient for me. I cannot properly ask anything less, to be worthy of you. If I were to ask less, I should always be in want. In you alone do I have all.’”

The Fifth Revelation in *Revelations of Divine Love*,
Julian of Norwich



“*Suscipe*” is Latin for “receive”, but it includes the idea of both receiving and taking up. Surrender is really only possible as a response to the love of God.

I invite you to close by prayerfully reading Catherine’s *Suscipe*, and pondering how this prayer speaks into your life, and the life of your Mercy Associates community, at this time.

You might also like to compose your own prayer of surrender.

The *Suscipe* of Catherine McAuley



My God, I am yours for time and eternity.
Teach me to cast myself entirely
into the arms of your loving Providence
with a lively, unlimited confidence in your compassionate,
tender pity.
Grant, O most merciful Redeemer,
That whatever you ordain or permit may be acceptable to me.
Take from my heart all painful anxiety;
let nothing sadden me but sin,
nothing delight me but the hope of coming to the possession of
You
my God and my all, in your everlasting kingdom. Amen