

# Walking the Pathways of Mercy

Catherine McAuley wrote: "Mercy, the principal path pointed out by Jesus Christ, to those who are desirous of following him."

...Catherine McAuley and the Tradition of Mercy 1995 edited by Mary C. O'Sullivan University of Notre Dame

**Gathering Rite:** *Take some time to greet each other and share briefly where you have noticed the presence of Mercy within you or around you recently.*

**A Call to Prayer:** *Light a candle.*

**Leader:** Into the silence that stills  
into the silence that warms  
into the warmth that lights  
into the light that calms  
into the calm that loves  
Into the love that is  
lead my noisy needing spirit,  
O God.  
Into the silence that stills.

Poem by Mary Wickham rsm  
*P3 Be as Shining Lamps*

*Move into silence and for a few moments gaze softly at the image of Catherine. After a while close your eyes and give your attention to whatever you are noticing ... from the image, and within yourself...*



Image by Megan Seres.  
*p98 Be as Shining Lamps*

## Opening Prayer

**ALL:** Merciful God, source of goodness, be with us here today. We thank you. You have shown us in Catherine McAuley a woman of faith and dedication. Teach us, we pray, to embrace her love for all people and her compassion for the poor. Bless us with her ability to inspire others, and her courage in defending the dignity of all people. Increase our desire, like Catherine, to respond to your invitation to use our gifts to realise your love and mercy in our lives and the lives of our families and communities. Amen.

The images, words and prayers are all adapted from the wonderful resource: *Be as Shining Lamps: Preserving, Nurturing, Reimagining the Mercy Charism* by Caroline Thompson

## A Reading from Holy Scripture

...blessed are the merciful for they shall be mercied'. Matt 5:7

### For Reflection

Mercy Associates are called to live and share the mercy of God.

We are women and men inspired by the life of Jesus Christ revealed in Scripture, and by the vision and charism of Catherine McAuley. *M A Vision Statement*

Mercy Associates form faith communities in which to nurture and live out the charism and mission of mercy. *M A Vision in Practice*

What does Catherine McAuley's life and ministry teach us about living mercy?

Choose any one of the following statements that reflect Catherine's teaching to us and sit with it in the quiet. Consider how you embody this aspect of Mercy and what challenges you about living mercy day to day.

1. MERCY IS A VERB—being the face of God's love to everyone we meet.
2. MERCY IS A HABIT OF THE HEART—a way of seeing and living that grows deeper with every encounter.
3. MERCY IS GOSPEL-CENTRED—reflecting the example of Jesus and dedicated to bringing life and dignity to all. It is 'the beating heart of the Gospel'. Pope Francis *Misericordiae Vultus: The Face of Mercy #12*
4. MERCY IS PROPHETIC— a beacon and light for others on the power of love.
5. MERCY IS BUILT ON LIMITLESS KINDNESS—as Catherine said: Sister of Mercy should be the 'kindest people on earth'.
6. MERCY IS RECIPROCAL—it is blessing and blessedness as revealing in the Beatitudes 'blessed are the merciful for they shall be mercied'. Matt 5:7
7. MERCY IS IMMEDIATE AND CONSTRUCTIVE—Catherine reminds us that: the poor need help today not next week.
8. MERCY IS UNIVERSAL—it is not restricted to religion, doctrine or geography—mercy includes the neighbour we cannot see—mercy has a global focus and presence.

*From Caroline Thompson: Be as Shining Lamps P31*

Take time to discuss your reflections with the person beside you, or share in the larger group.

### Closing Prayer

**LEADER:** Catherine McAuley had a dream.

We have the privilege of knowing it.

We have the responsibility to understand it.

We have a duty to protect it.

We have the honour to live it...

Let's live it well—together we can make a difference.

**ALL:** May the blessing of God's peace live in our hearts and Mercy be the work of our hands. Amen

**Choose a Closing Song or Pray *The Suscipe* together**