

Mercy Day

*“I love You, Lord
For your mercy never fails me
All my days, I’ve been held in Your hands
From the moment that I wake up,
Until I lay my head
Oh, I will sing of the goodness of God”¹*

Mercy is one of God’s most evocative attributes. The ancient Israelites learned that their God was a merciful God who would not abandon or destroy them (Deuteronomy



4:31). The prophet Micah asked what God required from His people. The answer? To love mercy, to do justice and to walk humbly before God (Micah 6:8). But what does mercy look like? Mercy is so much more than charitable thoughts to others. Mercy evokes action. God is merciful, not because He is God but because He

demonstrates His mercy to us. Mercy is love in action. Mercy involves others. It does not discriminate. Mercy originates in God. The Apostle Peter wrote that we are the people of God because we have received His mercy (1 Peter 2:10). This is key. We cannot give away that which we do not have. We are merciful not because we are nice people, but because we have experienced and received the mercy of God. And because of that experience, we can now freely give away what God has given us.



¹ *Goodness of God*. Songwriters: Ben Fielding/Brian Johnson/Edward Martin Cash/Jason Ingram/Jenn Johnson. Lyrics© Capitol CMG Publishing, Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC.

So, how do we demonstrate mercy in the world today? Catherine McAuley stands as our example. Like Jesus, she saw the needs around her and did something about it. She used that which had been gifted to her to help those in need. We often think we have nothing to offer – nothing to give away – but there is always something we can do, even if it is as simple as a smile and an encouraging word.

Questions for Reflection

1. Read through the extract from Mary Wickham rsm. How does this inspire you to show mercy to others?
2. Consider the life of Catherine McAuley. How did she show mercy to a) those she ministered to and b) those she led?
3. In what ways has Jesus been a source of mercy for you?
4. How might you be able to reimagine the charism of mercy in the world today?
5. Do you belong to a faith community that is encouraging you to live out mercy?

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, cited in *Be As Shining Lamps*).

Blessing

Catherine McAuley had a dream
We have the privilege of knowing it
We have the responsibility to understand it
We have the duty to protect it
We have the honor to live it...
Let's live it well – together we can make a difference.
(Maria McGuinness rsm, 2010. *Challenges to Mercy. Listen.*)

If not, where might you be able to find such a community?