

# Growing Mercy: A Pathway to Hope

“We have one solid comfort amidst this little tripping about: our hearts can always be in the same place, centred in God—for whom alone we go forward—or stay back.”

*Letter to Mary de Sales White, Dec 20, 1840*

## Call to Prayer:

Read the Psalm and/or listen to the hymn  
*Come to the Quiet* by Robert Kochis

**Psalm 131** From *Psalms for Praying* Nan C. Merriall

Most gracious Presence, let me not  
  be arrogant,  
  nor boast of my virtuous deeds;  
Let me not seek fame or set my heart  
  on the riches of the world.  
Help me to calm and quiet my soul,  
  like a child quieted at its  
  mother’s breast;  
  like a child that is quieted,  
  be so my soul.  
I shall be at peace in You,  
  O Breath of my breath,  
  from this time forth and

**For Reflection:** Read this Poem by Jessica Powers  
*To Live with the Spirit*

To live with the Spirit of God is to be a listener.  
It is to keep the vigil of mystery,  
earthless and still.  
One leans to catch the stirring of the Spirit,  
strange as the wind’s will. strange as the wind’s will.  
The soul that walks where the wind of the Spirit blows  
turns like a wandering weather-vane toward love.  
It may lament like Job or Jeremiah,  
echo the wounded hart, the mateless dove.  
It may rejoice in spaciousness of meadow  
that emulates the freedom of the sky.  
Always it walks in waylessness, unknowing;  
it has cast down forever from its hand  
the compass of the whither and the why.  
To live with the Spirit of God is to be a lover.  
It is becoming love, and like to Him  
toward Whom we strain with metaphors of creatures:  
fire-sweep and water-rush and the wind’s whim.  
The soul is all activity, all silence;  
and though it surges Godward to its goal,  
it holds, as moving earth holds sleeping noonday,  
the peace that is the listening of the soul.



*Contemplation* by Iraq artist  
Ghassan Salman Faidi, 2009.

“This is the first, the wildest and the wisest  
thing I know: that the soul exists and is  
built entirely out of attentiveness.”

*Mary Oliver, Poet*

## Share or journal:

How do you ‘listen’ to God?  
Where have you noticed the presence  
of God’s mercy?  
What are you noticing that is leading you  
to hope?

“Mercy is the force that reawakens us to new life and instills in us the courage to look to the future with hope.”

*Pope Francis (Misericordia Vultus 10)*

## The Unfolding Gift of God's Mercy:

Moved by the Spirit, Catherine McAuley was aware of her own need for God's mercy. "With faith and confidence in God's providence she drew companions into a new way of living God's mercy in response to the needs of the times." *Kaupapa Whakahaere o Nga Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa –Constitutions of the Sisters of Mercy New Zealand #2*

## Mercy is both community and mission.

There are celebrations all around the world for Mercy Day every year. Here is a snippet from Dublin.

It is with great joy and gratitude that I extend greetings across the Mercy World for Mercy Day 2025 from Catherine's House in Baggot Street, Dublin.

As we gather in-person and online as a Mercy Family, to celebrate Mercy Day, I am reminded of the threads that connect us across continents and cultures, across ministries and generations. Though we come from many different places and experiences, we are all embraced by God's infinite love and we are all woven into the one Mercy story, inspired by the vision of Catherine McAuley.

On this day, we give thanks for Catherine's courage and her unwavering trust in God's providence. Her "yes" to God's call became a cloak of compassion for the poor, the sick, the marginalized, and those in need of education and dignity. Today, we continue to carry that cloak into our world - responding to the cries of the earth and the cries of the poor, standing with those displaced and forgotten, and offering mercy wherever we are.

I especially want to acknowledge Mercy Sisters, Mercy associates, partners in ministry, colleagues, and friends who are celebrating today. Each of you embodies mercy in action, and together you make visible the compassionate face of God in today's world.

As we gather across the Mercy World this week for celebrations, we also pause for prayer. At our Mass in Catherine's House we include prayers for peace, for healing, for justice, and for a future wrapped in mercy.

May our celebration of Mercy Day renew our spirits, deepen our commitment, and strengthen our bonds as one global Mercy family.

Happy Mercy Day! May Catherine McAuley's vision continue to inspire and guide us all.

Mary O'Donovan, CEO, Mercy International Association

**Silent Prayer:** *Take some minutes in silence now to be aware of the mystery of mercy.*

"Each day is a step which we take toward Eternity and we shall continue thus from day to day until we take the last step bringing us into the presence of God"

Catherine McAuley Retreat Instructions p185.

"May our celebration of Mercy Day renew our spirits, deepen our commitment, and strengthen our bonds as one global Mercy family."

Mary O'Donovan  
CEO, Mercy International Association



**Closing Blessing:** We go forward in Mercy together. We go with hearts full of gratitude for the spirit and action of Mercy in our lives.

**Blessing the Way** from Jan Richardson. [janrichardson.com](http://janrichardson.com)

With every step you take, this blessing rises up to meet you.

It has been waiting long ages for you.

Look close and you can see the layers of it,

how it has been fashioned by those who walked this road before you,

how it has been created of nothing but their determination and their dreaming,

how it has taken its form from an ancient hope that drew them forward

and made a way for them when no way could be seen.

Look closer and you will see this blessing is not finished.,

that you are part of the path it is preparing,

that you are how this blessing means to be a voice within the wilderness

and a welcome for the way. Amen.