



180 Minutes with Catherine McAuley

Triduum for Foundation Day 2011 – Day One

On December 12th 1831, Catherine McAuley founded the Sisters of Mercy. 180 years later, let us honour her memory and pray for the sick through her intercession. You are invited to spend 30 minutes in prayer (alone or with others) and 30 minutes getting to know Catherine better by reading about her, listening to a CD of her letters or viewing a DVD of her life.

Light a candle

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Open the prayer time by reciting or singing the Suscipe of Catherine McAuley

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Input on Catherine McAuley

Theme: Catherine the Laywoman

Scripture:

*Give justice to the weak and orphaned.
Maintain the right of the afflicted and the
destitute.*

Ps 82:3

A woman who dared to be different

Catherine McAuley was fifty-three years of age when she became a religious and only did so in order to regularise the work she had done all her life as a lay woman. Trust in God, and her natural talents, made Catherine her own woman and a staunch lay leader at a time when female involvement in any area was deeply resented. She set about bringing merciful relief to people craving for spiritual and material help, for justice, knowledge and love. The house she built on Baggot Street was at once 'a hostel, a sheltered workshop and employment bureau' - big innovations for that era. Her vision attracted other lay women who joined in the good work. The original intention being that of 'a society of pious secular ladies who would devote themselves to the relief of suffering and the instruction of the ignorant. They would retain liberty to leave when they were no longer inclined to render such service.' It was as a lay woman that Catherine set out for France to learn appropriate teaching methods for her school. As lay women she and her early companions sought visiting privileges at Sir Patrick Dunn's hospital, to comfort the sick and dying, at a time when a Catholic priest was rarely granted entrance

Catherine was quick to recognise the potential of the women of Ireland for bringing about change in an unjust society. She believed that, 'No work of charity can be more productive of good to society, or more conducive to the happiness of the poor than the careful instruction of women'. Since the poor women she come in contact with had little or no talent for home management, and even less in the area of 'transferable and marketable skills to use for employment,' Catherine

began to teach them domestic skills and needle work. Eventually she opened a shop as an outlet for their products

- *“I never wanted to become a nun. I only wanted to serve the poor, because that seemed to be what God was asking of me.”*
- *“God makes use of various means to further the accomplishment of God’s designs, some of which if we had a choice in the matter, would not be according to our views, but which eventually turn out to be the most conducive to the work of the Almighty.”*
- *Whatever way God takes to carry out the work, we should with cheerfulness and holy joy do the part allotted us, giving God glory by our faith and confidence.*
- *We can never say it is enough!*

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5 minutes silent reflection on what has just been shared about Catherine McAuley

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Take 5 minutes to think about people you know who are sick and in need of prayer. Write the names of the people you wish to pray for, on a piece of paper, and place them in a basket.

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Spend 15 minutes in silent prayer for the sick and pray the prayer for the sick

Prayer for the Sick

GOD OF LOVE AND MERCY
YOU INSPIRED CATHERINE MCAULEY
TO SERVE YOUR SON
BY RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF HER TIME.
MOVED BY HER CARE FOR THE SICK,
WE ASK THAT THROUGH HER PRAYERS
YOU REACH OUT WITH YOUR HEALING LOVE
AND RESTORE

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TO FULL HEALTH.
WE ASK THIS IN COMPLETE CONFIDENCE
THROUGH JESUS CHRIST YOUR SON.
AMEN

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Conclude with the prayer for the Beatification of Catherine McAuley

Prayer for the Beatification of Catherine McAuley

*Loving God
You chose Catherine McAuley
for the service of your people who are
Poor, Sick and Uneducated.
You inspired her to found the Sisters of Mercy
so that these good works might endure.*

*Give to each of us a portion of her compassionate spirit
and an ardent desire to serve your suffering people.*

*Graciously hear our prayers for Catherine
and by granting the favours we ask through her intercession,
hasten the day when her sanctity
will be celebrated by all the Church.*

You are invited to spend 30 minutes in the presence of
Catherine McAuley.

Suggested Resources:

Books:

- Morning and Evening Prayer of the Sisters of Mercy.
- The Correspondence of Catherine McAuley 1818 – 1841. Edited by Mary C. Sullivan.
- Daring to be Different by Anne Reid.
- The Little Book of Catherine of Dublin compiled by Don Mullan

CDs

- Your Ever Affectionate M.C. McAuley – excerpts from the letters of a very special woman.
- The Circle of Mercy – Songs of the Sisters of Mercy

DVDs

- Circle of Mercy – a reflection DVD on the works of the Sisters of Mercy throughout the world
- Circle of Mercy – the life of Catherine McAuley

