



# 180 Minutes with Catherine McAuley

## Triduum for Foundation Day 2011 – Day Two

On December 12<sup>th</sup> 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 Religious**

Scripture:

*“There is one thing further you must do.  
Sell all you have and give to the poor.  
You will have treasure in heaven.  
Then come and follow me.”*

Reflecting on the life of Catherine McAuley it is difficult to see how her life was different after she formally established the congregation of the Sisters of Mercy and became a religious. She had already put her money to good use on behalf of the poor, she already lived a life of prayer, and she had around her a group of women who shared her vision. There was, however, one thing more required of her - ‘Then come follow me’ entailed the total surrender of her liberty - and she did this graciously, even though the notion of becoming a religious was not attractive to her.

From the start, though intent on proper discipline and exactitude, she showed her originality by dispensing with the more severe rules and regulations by which she had been trained in George’s Hill. She aimed at making the convent a home where the superior was to foster love ... Love of God and love of neighbour were to be her rule of life. Fear and harshness found no place in that first Convent of Mercy.

(Catherine McAuley - Mercy Foundress, M. Nathy, pp.12-13)

According to Catherine, a Sister of Mercy ought to be “gentle, humble, patient, hard-working, obedient, charitable, but above all simple and joyous.” She might as well be giving us a pen-picture of herself. At another time she said, “a perfect religious is a perfect lady.” One of Catherine’s early companions, M. Vincent Whitty, was at a loss to describe her adequately:

"It seems to me that words are slow and imperfect in conveying all the lineaments of that gifted soul. She was so humble yet dignified, so playful and witty, yet reserved and charitable, so pious and strict, yet amiable and kind, but to me at least, the climax of all her attractions was that she was always the same, always ready to listen."

(Reproduced by kind permission of the Circle of Mercy, Northern Province)

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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.*

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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

