



180 Minutes with Catherine McAuley

Triduum for Foundation Day 2011 – Day Three

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's love for the Poor

Jesus said:

"When you give a party invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; that they cannot pay you back means that you are fortunate, because repayment will be made to you when the virtuous rise again. (Luke 14:1, 7-14)

Catherine McAuley's treatment of poor Mrs. Harper, as told in Anne Reid's book, leaves us in no doubt as to how she felt about the poor. Mrs. Harper hadn't seen soap and water for about fifty years but Catherine treated her as if she were a queen. The biggest excitement for the children who visited Mrs. Harper were the pet mice she had hidden away in her pocket and which escaped when her apron was taken from around her tiny waist. They were probably the only creature comfort she had experienced for a very long time.

Mrs. Harper was not the easiest person to love. She could be quite unkind and, indeed, abusive. Catherine was her favourite target. Because Catherine's heart was rich in love and mercy she could see beyond the abuse, and beneath it - to the loneliness and suffering of this poor old woman.

With Catherine there was an urgency as well as great generosity in her response to human need. "The poor need help today, not next week" is an often quoted saying of hers which was born of an experience she had (while still in Coolock House), of wanting to get urgent shelter for a young girl in need of protection. Catherine was told that the 'committee' would meet next week - in the meantime the girl was further exploited in the house of her employer. It has echoes, too, of the scripture challenge, 'Oh that today, you would listen to his voice, harden not your hearts.' Catherine did not shrink from personal discomfort when someone less fortunate needed help. "God knows," she said, "that I would rather be poor and hungry than that the poor of Kingstown, or anywhere else, should be deprived of any consolation in our power to afford them."

Even in death Catherine wanted to be associated with the poor, she was laid to rest in the earth like the poor, as she had requested, in the garden of Baggot Street convent, on 15th November 1841.

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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

