

PRAYER SERVICE FOR SISTERS OF MERCY AND ASSOCIATES
FEAST OF OUR LADY OF MERCY 2007.



THEME:

*Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God* Matt 5:8

GREETING: We open our hearts to you,
O God of purity and gentleness, and ask you to
accept our prayer with Mary and Catherine.

We offer our hearts to you, our Liberator,
as with the single-mindedness of Mary and
Catherine, we come before you, our Saviour
and Friend.

We bend our ears to you, our Wisdom, and
with Mary and Catherine, we offer you our
lives in unconditional love.

DOXOLOGY: Glory to you, God of
the single-hearted, to Jesus our wholesome
teacher, and to the Spirit whose purity moves
us in love, to live chaste and compassionate
lives, as we continue our journey to you in
faith, hope and mercy. Amen.

GATHERING HYMN: Magnificat

ANT: Blessed are the pure in heart for they
shall see God.

PSALM: 51: 1, 3 & 5-7.

Have mercy on me, O God in your goodness,
in your great tenderness wipe away my faults;
wash me clean of my guilt,
purify me from my sin.

Since you love sincerity of heart,
teach me the secrets of wisdom.
Purify me with hyssop until I am clean.

God create a clean heart for me,
put into me a new and constant spirit,
do not banish me from your presence,
do not deprive me of your holy spirit.

Be my saviour again, renew my joy,
keep my spirit ready and willing;
and I shall teach transgressors the way to you,
and to you the sinner will return.

Save me from death, God my saviour,
and my tongue will tell of your goodness;
Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will speak out your praise.



DOXOLOGY: Glory to you God of the single-hearted, to Jesus our gentle and wholesome teacher, and to the Spirit whose purity moves us in love, to live chaste and compassionate lives as we continue our journey to you in faith, hope and mercy. Amen.

ANT: Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.

SCRIPTURE READING *James 1:19b-25a*

Dear friends, let each one of you be quick to hear, slow to speak and slower still to yield to corruption, irritation or abrasiveness. The harsh, selfish and discourteous person does not reflect the meekness and purity of God. Therefore put away all self centredness and receive the Word of God with tenderness. It will save your souls. Be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For to be a hearer of the Word and not to act on it is to be like a person who looks at their natural face in a mirror and going away forgets what it looked like. Be rather like those who study the Word - the perfect teaching on freedom; makes it their own, and acts upon it in a meek and single-hearted way. Those who model the single-heartedness of God are the truly blessed.

MEDITATION:

Here, Jesus, I hear James expanding on your great beatitude, “Blessed are the pure in heart, they shall see God.” In it you have given me the heart of your teaching – your template for life. You delivered it from a mountain. This concept of altitude features in many of the most self-transcendent moments of your life – your:

Third temptation (Matt 4:5-11) Transfiguration (Mk 9:2-8)

Agony in the Mount of Olives (Lk 22:39-43)

Death on Calvary (Jn 19:16-19) and

Ascension (Matt 28:16-20).

On each occasion you were single-hearted. You put the reign of God first. You transcended self, conquered sin, and demonstrated what it is to be pure in heart.

This beatitude is my mountain and I am not sure that I am able to climb, let alone transcend it, on my own.

It is a challenge which demands:

immense moral courage

a well informed and lively conscience

willingness to take risks

an unconditional commitment to serve you alone, and forget self

a willingness to challenge social injustice every time I perceive it

an openness to failure

strength to accept being unpopular with my peers, colleagues and sometimes even my Church marginalisation, isolation, ridicule, and loneliness.



Frankly I don't think I can take on this 'mountain', Jesus.
The climb is too steep, the altitude too great, and the risks are frightening.
This one is for other people, Jesus.
It's for the brave, the politically skilled, the rich and those with an accepted status:
Presidents, Prime Ministers, Popes, Cardinals, Bishops, Superiors of Religious Orders,
Managers of Companies and Educational Establishments.
It was right for you, too, Jesus. After all you were a rabbi and the Son of God.
I need to be accepted by my peers, family and community.
I'm a simple Christian, Jesus – just one who is aiming at discipleship – one of your 'little ones'.



Yes, my child, I am challenging you; but not in the way that you perceive.
Being pure in heart does not mean being immaculately holy.
It simply means that you offer all your anxieties and human frailties to me in prayer.
Then journey in tranquillity with Catherine and Mary.
With their support, make this beatitude your objective in life.
You are on a voyage. You have not arrived at your destination.
My 'mountain values' are heart-centred.
Altitude is in the mind. It's your heart I am seeking to convert.
You do not need to be an orator in the United Nations or in Rome.
Just carry out your normal daily tasks with your focus on me.

Know this too:

GOD-CENTEREDNESS mystifies the guilty
INTEGRITY troubles the deceitful
GENTLENESS confuses the arrogant
HUMILITY puzzles the aggressive
FAIR-MINDEDNESS disarms the prejudiced
COMPASSION confronts the callous
NON-VIOLENT STEAD-FASTNESS in the face of injustice torments the bully

It is your actions and your behaviour that will speak of my ways.
People will not appear to 'listen' but they will 'hear'.

In my time, not yours, not only will you become an invaluable partner with me in mission
but those who know you, and appear to reject the values inherent in this beatitude will join
my discipleship. With them you will rank amongst my single-hearted - "the pure in heart".
Together we will revitalize Mercy and through it, the Church.



INTERCESSIONS:

We praise and thank you God of the pure in heart, as once again we celebrate with Mary and Catherine. As their followers we bring before you now, our own needs and frailties and those of our world as we pray for:

OURSELVES that in our renewed commitment to single-mindedness, to Jesus and to Mercy, we may strive to work and pray with Catherine's hands and Mary's heart.

OUR AGED and infirm Sisters, Associates, Family Member and Friends, that those of us who are able-bodied may strive to support them and to meet their needs with Catherine's hands and Mary's heart.

SISTERS who are feeling broken in their current ministries or living situations, that they may be blest with renewed single-mindedness, and that those who are responsible for their pastoral care may minister to them with Catherine's hands and Mary's heart.

THE PEOPLES of Zimbabwe, Darfur, the Sudan, Afghanistan, Iraq and all the troubled nations of our world where selfishness, greed, aggression, prejudice, ruthlessness and injustice prevail; that in trying to help them the political and religious leaders of the free world may negotiate in a way that speaks of Catherine's hands and Mary's heart.

WOMEN and girls who are traded internationally for the sexual gratification of the selfish, corrupt, vulgar, and dysfunctional. Grant that those who come to their rescue may be 'mountain people' who share the values of Catherine and Mary.

OUR DEAD Sisters, Associates, Family Members and Friends that they may be escorted by Jesus to the Paschal Banquet, and be recognised by Catherine and Mary as partners who during their time on mission lived the beatitude of the pure in heart.

CONCLUDING PRAYER:

God of the pure in heart, in partnership with Jesus, Mary and Venerable Catherine, we ask you to hear these and all our petitions on this special day.

As we continue our journey in faith, our ministry in hope and our friendships in love grant that we may be ever faithful to our charism and deserve, one day, to join the elect with you in your Kingdom. Amen.

BLESSING:

*May the wholesomeness of our God inspire us.
May the purity of Jesus motivate us.
May the integrity of the Holy Spirit encourage us.
And may the blessing † of Divine Providence descend upon
and be ours now and remain with us forever.*

Amen.

