

Anniversary of Death of Catherine McAuley

Introduction:

Today we gather as a Mercy community,
...grateful for the life and legacy of Catherine McAuley,
...conscious of our call to be the heart and hands of
Mercy in our day
...and placing our hope in the God Who walks with us
each day.



Be sure to have a comfortable cup of tea for them
when I am gone.

— Catherine McAuley's deathbed concern for her grieving Sisters.

Hymn: *Suscipe of Catherine McAuley*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSvB1D-of3U>

Readings:

- *Each day is a step we take towards eternity and we shall continue to step from day to day until we take the last step, which will bring us into the presence of God; let us always walk before God in anticipation of that day.* (Catherine McAuley)
- *By early November 1841 Catherine became bedridden and on the 8th she received the last sacraments. Visits from family and community members filled her last days. For each she had a personal word and a blessing. Although she had completed her formal will before leaving for Birmingham (in September), she now told her sisters who kept vigil at her bedside that her legacy to the institute was charity ... Concern for the fatigue of the sisters gathered around her led to her now cherished wish that they should “have a good cup of tea when I am gone.” Catherine died in the evening of November 11 and according to her wishes was laid in the ground like the poor. The deep sorrow of family, friends and community members is perhaps most simply and poignantly expressed by Sister Theresa White: “I feel sad to have outlived her.”* (Sheila Carney, rsm)

Reflection/Sharing:

- Catherine’s love and concern for her sisters was evident throughout her life. What stirs in you as you think about her personal visits with each of them on her deathbed?
- What personal word do you think Catherine might have said to you? Can you receive her word and her blessing to you at this particular time in your life?

Response:

God of the living and the dead,
As we remember our dear Catherine McAuley, we remember also those sisters, living or deceased who have followed in her footsteps over the past 183 years. We thank You for their lives and for the words and deeds of mercy done in your name.

On this day of remembrance, we also pray for all who have died in wars and conflicts and for all who continue to struggle for peace and justice in our world.

Help us to live each day mindfully and gratefully, conscious of our call to embrace Catherine's spirit of hospitality, trust, joy, compassionate service, and care for one another and for all that has been entrusted to us. Amen.

Blessing:

May the love and mercy of God be:
above us to overshadow us,
beneath us to uphold us,
before us to guide us,
behind us to protect us,
beside us to help us on each step of our life journey,
within us to animate our hearts and give lightness to our steps. AMEN

