

"We can never say it is enough"
Catherine McAuley



Leader:

We gather today in this House of Mercy dreamed by Catherine McAuley and shaped by the rhythm of present need and merciful response, by sending forth and gathering in for 187 years. Rooted in this place and in our common heritage, we treasure what has been entrusted to us and we continue to ask what Mercy may yet be.

All Sing: "What Mercy May Yet Be", Verse 1

Leader:

And so it began . . .

Reader:

A Reading from the Derry Large Manuscript

[Catherine] had no expectation of the large fortune that afterwards was hers, but her benefactor had once spoken of leaving her a thousand pounds, and she thought, if she had that or even a hundred pounds, she would hire a couple rooms and work for and with her protégées. The idea haunted her very dreams. Night after night she would see herself in some very large place where a number of young women were employed . . . while she herself would be surrounded by a crowd of ragged children which she was washing and dressing very busily. The premises therefore were planned to contain dormitories for young women who for want of proper protection might be exposed to danger, a female poor school, and apartments for ladies who might choose, for any definite or indefinite time, to devote themselves to the service of the poor...

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Brief Reflection

Reader:

A Reading from the Limerick Manuscript

The 24th of September was finally fixed on for commencing the work; Miss Doyle suggesting that “House of Mercy” would be a good name for the Establishment. Nor can we think it was without a singular providence of God that a day was chosen which in a special manner placed the house under the protection of His Immaculate Mother, and caused it to be named from the most amiable of her attributes, by which she chiefly resembles Him, whose mercies are above all His works. Therefore on the appointed feast some young women were admitted to the dormitories, and the schools opened, to which poor children came in great numbers. A few kind and charitable ladies volunteered their services, and the good work began its career of usefulness.

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All Sing: “What Mercy May Yet Be” Verse 2

Leader:

And so it continued.

Trocaire, 1981 gathered us in, focused us, and sent us forth once again as, around the world, we committed ourselves to stand together in the power of God’s merciful word spoken in Jesus and Catherine and to search for new ways to express God’s mercy in collaboration with all people of good will. And Trocaire readied us for the call to move yet more deeply into relationship with one another through tending Catherine’s House and assuring that Mercy would continue to flow back and forth across its threshold.

A new vision for this venerable house came to be – one which would preserve its heritage, continue the rich tradition of hospitality, link the far flung branches of the Mercy family for the purpose of re-imagining our global identity and birthing a future where, in the spirit of Catherine, we can be globally interconnected and where we can connect the rich and the poor for the life of the world.

All Sing: “What Mercy May Yet Be” Verse 3

Leader:

And so it came to be. On March 31, 1994, the refurbished building was given into the care of Mercy International Association and the following July was officially opened by President Mary Robinson. The first team was commissioned with the prayer that they would tend our heritage, receive visitors and be witnesses to the mercy of God in this house. In the intervening years, the mission of Mercy International Centre has expanded to include the work of justice through the United Nations, the care of our common Mercy Heritage, the opportunity for members of the Mercy family and other pilgrims to visit and be refreshed, international communications and the ongoing efforts toward the canonization of Catherine McAuley.



When Catherine came to this house in 1827, she carried with her the keys of a deep love for God's poor, a determination to use her inheritance to make some lasting effort in their behalf, the support and encouragement of friends, collaborative relationships and an attentiveness to God's will. These keys, in her hands, unlocked the future of Mercy. What keys have unlocked the doors of Mercy International Association in these past 20 years and what keys will carry us into the future?

Group Sharing

Intercessory Prayer

Leader: Grateful for all that has been and confident in the loving care of our God of Mercy, we pray . . .

✞ In her day, Catherine opened her door to the homeless. Today, displaced persons and refugees gather on our thresholds and ask:

Cantor: "I stand at the door and knock. Open to me."

All repeat: "I stand at the door and knock. Open to me."

Leader: For them and for all the members of the Mercy family who minister to them, we pray. You are invited to name persons who share in this ministry.

✞ In her day, Catherine opened her door to threatened women. Today, woman who are trafficked and exploited gather on our thresholds and ask:

Cantor: "I stand at the door and knock. Open to me."

All repeat: "I stand at the door and knock. Open to me."

Leader: For them and for all the members of the Mercy family who work for an end to trafficking and other forms of human slavery, we pray. You are invited to name persons who share in this ministry.

☞ In her day, Catherine opened pathways of communication among members of the Mercy community. Today, those who long for a worldwide sense of membership and connection gather on our thresholds and ask:

Cantor: “I stand at the door and knock. Open to me.”

All repeat: “I stand at the door and knock. Open to me.”

Leader: For them and for communicators whose words and images strengthen the ties among us, we pray. You are invited to name person who share in this ministry.

☞ In her day, Catherine opened her door to the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy. Today, those who seek to preserve our heritage gather on our threshold and ask:

Cantor: “I stand at the door and knock. Open to me.”

All repeat: “I stand at the door and knock. Open to me.”

Leader: For them and for all archivists and scholars of our Mercy tradition, we pray. You are invited to name person who share in this ministry.

☞ In her day, Catherine opened the door to collaborators who would carry her vision of Mercy forward. In our day, members of the Mercy family from around the world have gathered on the threshold of this House of Mercy, offering their skills to carry forward its programs and intentions and they ask:

Cantor: “I stand at the door and knock. Open to me.”

All repeat: “I stand at the door and knock. Open to me.”

Leader: For all the staff members and volunteers of Mercy International Association and Mercy International Centre, we pray. You are invited to name person who share in this ministry.

And let us pray together as we first prayed twenty years ago.

When the many strains of Mercy echo here
With tones of near and distant peoples,
May these walls gather us in,
May these windows and doors open us out.
May this be a resting place and rising place,
A sharing and gathering place.
May all within be refreshed and filled
With Catherine’s laughter, love and life.
And may you, O God, with your Son and Spirit, speak to our hearts.
Then as one voice, we’ll sing with a new and vibrant beat
The wonder of your Mercy to the world.
Muir, Mother of God, be with us in this place
And show us the face of Christ. Amen.

All Sing: “What Mercy May Yet Be” Verse 4