



Advent Ritual

Mercy Place

5 December 2015

Welcome

Veronica Ekerick rsm

Sandra Loth rsm

*Prayer Invocation for the Land
and its First People*

We acknowledge the living culture of
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples,
the traditional custodians of the land and waters.

*All: We recognize their deep feelings
of attachment and relationship
to country, and pay respects to the elders
past, present and emerging,
and the traditions with which
they have gifted this place.*

We pray for our Indigenous sisters and brothers,
that their dignity and rights be honoured and their
wounds of injustice be healed.

*All: We commit ourselves to walking together
in a spirit of reconciliation,
made tangible in acts of justice.*



Gathering Song

With Your Grace

(Gina Ogilvie & Monica O'Brien)

God of mercy, God of grace,
Come among us fill this place,
Heal our hurting, mend our wounds,
Come among us with your grace.

Pour your love upon us now,
Touch our spirits, make us new.
See our longing, hear our prayer,
Come among us with your grace.

Bless this moment, take our hearts,
Use our hands to honour you.
With our voices we will sing,
"Come among us with your grace."



Lighting of Candles

As we continue the Advent journey and prepare to enter into the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy (only the third special Jubilee in Church history) we light a candle for all who have been, and are, living witnesses to the compassion of God.

Candle lit at each table

In remembering our ‘ancestors in faith’, we celebrate their revealing the face of God in the centre of life.

All: These women and men have carried this light and placed it into our hands. May we continue the journey with authenticity, compassion and joy.



Focus

Advent is a door

A door is an invitation

A door offers possibility

A door invites a response

Advent is a door

How will we respond?

The Holy Door becomes the Door of Mercy

Since the 15th century 'the door' has been used as a ritual expression of conversion.

Passing through and crossing the threshold is a gesture of leaving the past behind and being open to God's grace, freedom and light.

Jesus is the Door!



The opening of the Holy Door in Rome on
8 December 2015 recalls

- the Solemnity of the Immaculate
Conception
- and the 50th anniversary of the closing of
the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council.

The Holy Door will become a *Door of Mercy*.
All who enter will experience the love of God who
consoles, pardons, and instills hope.

How will we respond?

Invitation to share at table

Maria Sullivan rsm

*Let us centre ourselves in the sacredness
of this listening moment.*



Reflection 1

Margaret Salmon rsm

Misericordiae Vultus

The Face of Mercy

Mercy is the very foundation of the Church's life.

We are commissioned to announce the mercy of God, the beating heart of the Gospel.

The life of the Church is authentic and credible only when she becomes a convincing herald of mercy. She knows that her primary task, especially at a moment full of great hopes and signs of contradiction, is to introduce everyone to the great mystery of God's mercy by contemplating the face of Christ.

We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity and peace.

Excerpts from Paragraphs 10, 12, 25

Quiet reflection time



Reflection 2

Patricia Blundell rsm

The Constitutions of the Sisters of Mercy, Brisbane

God's mercy is from age to age. *Lk 1:50*
Our charism comes to us also
through those women who continued
the search for that same true spirit of mercy.
In their faith-filled service
they, too, found mercy. I.05

If we are to contribute
that service of mercy
which the newness of the gospel demands
for our world,
we must constantly search out the meaning
of God's choice of those who are poor. *Lk 4:18*

We must be among those with whom
Christ identified totally when he said:
*Whatever you do to the least of these,
You do to me.* *Mt 25:40*
I.06

Quiet reflection time



Reflection 3

Gwen Doan rsm

The Gospel of John 10:9, 10b

Jesus said, 'I am the door.
Whoever enters through me will be saved,
and will come in and go out and find pasture...

I came so that you may have life,
and have it more abundantly.'

Quiet reflection time

Maria Sullivan rsm

Question for reflection from Pope Francis

*How can the year to come be 'steeped in Mercy',
bringing the goodness and tenderness of God to
life?*

Paragraph 3 Misericordiae Vultus

Quiet reflection time

Invitation to share at table



Response to time of Reflection & Sharing

This morning we have been entrusted with the Word from Scripture, our Constitutions, Pope Francis and each other. These have the capacity to change our lives.

They remind us that we are part of an evolving story greater than ourselves, calling us and all creation to more abundant life.

Let us respond to the richness of these words through this song written especially for the Year of Mercy.

Be Merciful

(Marty Haugen)

Refrain:

*Be merciful, be merciful,
just as God is merciful to you.
Answer evil with good, answer hatred with love.
Be merciful as God is merciful.*

As a tender Father, God is merciful.
As a loving mother, God is merciful.
Slow to anger and full of compassion.

*Be merciful, be merciful,
just as God is merciful to you.
Answer evil with good, answer hatred with love.
Be merciful as God is merciful.*

Show compassion to the lost and forgotten.
Give comfort to the sick and the dying.
Do to others as you would have them do to you.
Refrain

And as Jesus taught us, love your enemies.
Do good to the ones who hate you.
Do to others as you would have them do to you.
Refrain

Offer blessings to the ones who curse you.
And pray for the ones who abuse you.
Do to others as you would have them do to you.

*Be merciful, be merciful,
just as God is merciful to you.
Answer evil with good, answer hatred with love.
Be merciful as God is merciful.
Be merciful as God is merciful.*



Community Prayers

Maria Sullivan rsm

This Season of Advent draws us
into the deepest and richest sense of life.
Let us pray for God's gift of mercy.

Genevieve Caffery rsm

For all civic and religious leaders
silent prayer we pray:

All: Open the door of wisdom.

For victims of war, torture and violence
silent prayer we pray:

All: Open the door of peace.

For refugees, displaced persons, the neglected,
the abused

silent prayer we pray:

All: Open the door of justice.



For all who work to relieve the pain and suffering
of the world

silent prayer we pray:

All: Open the door of compassion.

For those who forge new paths to freedom and
reconciliation

silent prayer we pray:

All: Open the door to forgiveness.

For our fragile home within the entire universe

silent prayer we pray:

All: Open the door to wonder and respect.

For those who have been hurt in any way whilst in
the care of the Sisters of Mercy

silent prayer we pray:

All: Open the door to healing.

For ourselves as we wait on the threshold of the
Year of Mercy

silent prayer we pray:

All: Open the door to abundant life.



Maria Sullivan rsm

Advent God,
continue to journey with us
so that we may become a more effective
sign of Your healing action
in our lives and world.

All: Amen.

Maria Sullivan rsm

Greeting of Peace at Table

Today we have had the opportunity to be nourished
by each other in our circles of reflection.

In offering a Sign of Peace at your table,
may this greeting be a sign of our commitment to
support each other as we journey into the Year of
Mercy.



*Catherine Reuter rsm
Sandra Lupi rsm*

The Launch of Mercy International Reflection Process

Doorkeepers of Mercy

Gifting

Christmas Gift

Mercy International Reflection Process materials

Catherine Reuter rsm

Blessing

Go forth from this place with joy,
go forth with hope.

All:

*We go forth from this place
with remembering hearts,
grateful for all that we have shared.*



Go forth with arms held wide,
open to what God sends to us
for merciful embrace.

All:

*We go forth from this place
with feet that itch
to continue the dance
and to walk the roads
of mercy.*

Go forth from this place
with enthusiastic faith in God
and in one another
until we meet again.

All:

*May God the Trinity of love
– Creator, Word and Wisdom –
bless us on our way.*

(Mary Wickham, *'Souvenirs of Spirit'*
Poems and Prayers)

In this Jubilee Year let us allow God
to surprise us! (*Paragraph 25 Misericordiae Vultus*)



The Circle of Mercy

(Jeanette Goglia rsm)

In Mercy, we touch the hearts of those
who are in mis'ry.

In Mercy, we're touched by them
and feel their strength and courage.

In Mercy, we heal the pain of those
who are in sorrow.

In Mercy, we're healed by them
and see the face of hope.

For the circle of Mercy is timeless.

It is spirit of life itself!

*Which roots us in faith, and lifts us in hope,
and holds us in God's loving care.*

and holds us in God's loving care.

In Mercy, we welcome those
the world has left rejected.

In Mercy, we're drawn within
the loving heart of God.

In Mercy, we forgive the incompleteness
in another.

In Mercy, our sins are healed
and we are whole again.



*For the circle of Mercy is timeless.
It is spirit of life itself!
Which roots us in faith, and lifts us in hope,
and holds us in God's loving care.
and holds us in God's loving care.*

In Mercy, the Spirit-faith
will root us in God's presence.
In Mercy, the Spirit-hope
will lift us out of doubt.
In Mercy, the love of God
will be our joy in living.
In Mercy, we join with one another
on our journey.

*For the circle of Mercy is timeless.
It is spirit of life itself!
Which roots us in faith, and lifts us in hope,
and holds us in God's loving care.
and holds us in God's loving care.*



Acknowledgements: Hymns used with permission Licence No. 453



The Holy Door becomes The Door of Mercy



A holy door or *porta sancta* has been used since the 15th century as a ritual expression of conversion. Pilgrims and penitents pass through it as a gesture of leaving the past behind and cross the threshold to grace, freedom and light. Often these rituals are associated with prayer, pilgrimage, sacrifice, confession and indulgences.

But the door finds meaning only when the believer associates the door with Christ. Jesus is the Door! In the words of Pope Francis, ‘There is only one way that opens wide the entrance into the life of communion with God: this is Jesus, the one and absolute way to salvation. To him alone can the words of Psalmist be applied in full truth: ‘This is the door of the Lord where the just may enter’

(Ps 118:20)’.

The Holy Door is fittingly situated within a church building. The door of the Church is the ‘silent witness to all the moments of our lives’. Often sacramental rituals begin at the door – here parents are welcomed as they bring their child for baptism; here catechumens are greeted at the Rite of Acceptance; and finally, the funeral ritual begins as the body of the deceased is welcomed at the door.

Pope Francis, in ‘*Misericordiae Vultus*’ (The Face of Mercy) writes of the joy of opening the Holy Door on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception and the 50th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. ‘On that day, the Holy Door will become a *Door of Mercy* through which anyone who enters will experience the love of God who consoles, pardons, and instills hope.

By crossing the threshold of the Door of Mercy, we will find the strength to embrace God’s mercy and dedicate ourselves to being merciful with others as the Father has been with us.

*Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions
Washington, DC*