

REFLECTION SHEET 2 - WOMEN SPEAK JUSTICE

The following reflective songs, quotations, poems and news items are intended to enable a reflective process rather than to be used as a prayer service in one sitting.

Theme Song

Women Speak Justice by Helen Kearins rsm from "Circle of Mercy"

<http://www.mercyworld.org/spirituality/view-reflection.cfm?uuid=F5AB5BA4-95C1-ADEE-B20D5BBA07B4973B>

A woman with hem'rhage an outcast
Through the crowd touches his cloak
Her sisters in cities and churches
Pour life blood still breaking the yoke.

Chorus

*And there's no more walking in silence
No more living in fear
Women speaking Justice
Listen who have ears to hear.*

She had a bad name in the city
With ointment she covered his feet
To those who preach law not encounter.
Compassion and laughter we meet

A women maligned and abandoned
Draws water then enters debate
Our wells and our stories we treasure
Refusing to be second rate.

Martha concerned for appearance
Mary content to be free
Too many things in our cupboards
Women beginning to see.

She runs to his tomb in the morning,
Proclaims that He's risen today.
Concerned for the earth and her people,
Such women will not go away.

Helen Kearins rsm "The Circle of Mercy"

Jesus Speaks

Mathew 25: 31 -25 'The Judgment of the Nations' – From the New American Bible

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?'

And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.' Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.'

Then they will answer and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?'

He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.'

Catherine Speaks

Letter to Teresa White November 1, 1838

[God] knows I would rather be cold and hungry than the poor in Kingston or elsewhere should be deprived of any consolation in our power to afford.

Letter to Mary Ann Doyle July 24, 1841

It is not a disposition to bestow gifts, like benevolent persons in the world, that bespeaks generosity of mind for the religious state. It is bestowing ourselves most freely and relying with unhesitating confidence on the providence of God.

Familiar Instructions, p. 2

We can never say "it is enough".

Familiar Instructions, p. 16

By our vocation to the Order of Mercy, and by a most sacred vow at our Holy Profession, we are engaged to comfort and instruct the sick poor of Christ. This is the principal reason why we are called "Sisters of Mercy," and why, to the faithful discharge of this duty, so many graces are annexed. Remark the words of our Blessed Lord, quoted in the first section of this Rule: "Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me." Oh! What an ineffable consolation to serve Christ Himself, in the person of the poor, and to walk in the very same path which he trod! And this happy vocation is ours, all unworthy as we are of such a grace.

Familiar Instructions, p. 136

It is better to relieve a hundred impostors – is there be any such – than to suffer one really distressed person to be sent away empty.

Familiar Instructions, p. 138

There are three things the poor prize more highly than gold, tho' they cost the donor nothing; among these are the kind word, the gentle, compassionate look and the patient hearing of their sorrows.

Familiar Instructions, p. 140

It is for God we serve the poor, and not for thanks.

The Spirit of the Institute

The corporal and spiritual works of mercy which draw religious from a life of contemplation, so far from separating them from the love of God, unite them much more closely to Him and render them more valuable in His holy service.

Pope Francis Speaks

Misericordiae Vultus

15. In this Holy Year, we look forward to the experience of opening our hearts to those living on the outermost fringes of society: fringes which modern society itself creates. How many uncertain and painful situations there are in the world today! How many are the wounds borne by the flesh of those who have no voice because their cry is muffled and drowned out by the indifference of the rich! During this Jubilee, the Church will be called even more to heal these wounds, to assuage them with the oil of consolation, to bind them with mercy and cure them with solidarity and vigilant care. Let us not fall into humiliating indifference or a monotonous routine that prevents us from discovering what is new! Let us ward off destructive cynicism! Let us open our eyes and see the misery of the world, the wounds of our brothers and sisters who are denied their dignity, and let us recognize that we are compelled to heed their cry for help! May we reach out to them and support them so they can feel the warmth of our presence, our friendship, and our fraternity! May their cry become our own, and together may we break down the barriers of indifference that too often reign supreme and mask our hypocrisy and egoism!

It is my burning desire that, during this Jubilee, the Christian people may reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. It will be a way to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty. And let us enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience of God's mercy. Jesus introduces us to these works of mercy in his preaching so that we can know whether or not we are living as his disciples. Let us rediscover these corporal works of mercy: to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, heal the sick, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead. And let us not forget the spiritual works of mercy: to counsel the doubtful, instruct the ignorant, admonish sinners, comfort the afflicted, forgive offences, bear patiently those who do us ill, and pray for the living and the dead.

We cannot escape the Lord's words to us, and they will serve as the criteria upon which we will be judged: whether we have fed the hungry and given drink to the thirsty, welcomed the stranger and clothed the naked, or spent time with the sick and those in prison (cf. Mt 25:31-45). Moreover, we will be asked if we have helped others to escape the doubt that causes them to fall into despair and which is often a source of loneliness; if we have helped to overcome the ignorance in which millions of people live, especially children deprived of the necessary means to free them from the bonds of poverty; if we have been close to the lonely and afflicted; if we have forgiven those who have offended us and have rejected all forms of anger and hate that lead to violence; if we have had the kind of patience God shows, who is so patient with us; and if we have commended our brothers and sisters to the Lord in prayer.

Mercy Women Speak

Joan McNamara rsm – Reflection on Psalm 100

My song is of mercy and justice.
Your commandments, I have promised, in love, to keep.
The vows I have made, bind me to you forever –
and now I reflect on the worth of my words.

I mean them as I sing them,
I mean my vows my promises –
But do I live them?
There is so much to change.

It is so hard, Lord, to work against the injustice
Shouting aloud in my world;
to let go of soft ease and know the

beauty of enough.

It is hard to turn from long accepted ways.
And yet you call me to this way of perfection perfection,
To follow you all the days of my life.

Mercy Is – Mary Wickham rsm

<http://marywickhamrsm.org.au/poem-theme/mercy-meaning/>

Mercy is a woman of indeterminate age
and unremarkable appearance.
She is not fussy about the company she keeps,
and tends to be full of excuses for her friends,
having seen life from their angle.

Her heart, like her pockets, is capacious.
She has a voice rich in tender understanding
But is at her best in silence
when she sits alongside
the grief-stricken and the guilty
and their sorrow seeps into her soul.

Curiously, she sees herself reflected
in the eyes of both murderer and victim,
so sits not in judgement but companionably.
She is a subtle teacher.

She makes strong cups of tea, cup after cup.
Her hands are worn by work
but eagerly sought by the dying.

Her feet are calloused from long roads
trudged with refugee and beggar.
She is an endurer of all horrors.

Mercy has a face wrinkled by kindness
and worn by the cost of living,
but even in hovels she has been given to laughter
and awareness of simple pleasures.

She has a store of lore and wisdom
but is never heard to complain
that she's heard any story
a hundred times before,
believing each teller to be
entitled to a hearing as if to the one and only.

Mercy is a lady comfortable to be with-
the safest and soundest-
blessed in her being
with the indisputable reality
that she is true daughter,

in manner and in mind,
of the maker of the universe.

From the News

<http://www.womenundersiegeproject.org/blog/entry/missing-women-of-the-mediterranean-refugee-crisis>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-3247705/What-life-REALLY-like-migrant-women-children-trapped-Calais-Jungle-camp.html>

...and others from your own local and national news or other International news happening as you reflect!

Other Voices

Dom Helder Camera

*“Go down
into the plans of God.
Go down
Deep as you may.
Simply, do not be afraid.
Let go. You will be led
Like a child whose mother
Holds him to her bosom
And against all comers
Is his shelter.”*

BLESSINGS FOR THE JOURNEY by Wilkie Au in “By way of the Heart’

Achieving wholeness and holiness requires traversing the difficult terrain of real life with all its challenges and crises. Even at the end of a lifetime of effort; we will still need to be completed by the finishing touch of the Divine artist. God will then bring to completion in us the eternal design of people destined to love wholeheartedly. While awaiting that unifying touch of divine grace, we pilgrims are called to follow the way of Jesus. And the Lord who walks with us assures that we will be blessed. The blessings sent our way may not always be enjoyable, but they will always nudge us forward in our efforts to love as God intended.

A rabbi was once asked, “What is a blessing?” He prefaced his answer with a riddle involving the creation account. The riddle went this way: after finishing his work on each of the first five days, the Bible states, “God saw that it was good.” But, God is not reported to have commented on the goodness of what was created on the sixth day when the human person was fashioned.

“What conclusion can you draw from that?” asked the rabbi.

Someone volunteered, “We can conclude that the human person is not good.” “Possibly,” the rabbi nodded, “but that’s not a likely explanation.” He then went on to explain that the Hebrew word translated as ‘good’ in Genesis is the word *tov*, which is better translated as ‘complete’. That is why the rabbi contended, God did not declare the human person to be *tov*.

Human beings are created incomplete. It is our life’s vocation to collaborate with our creator in fulfilling the Christ-potential in each of us. As the medieval mystic Meister Eckhart suggested, Christ longs to be born and developed into fullness in each of us.

A blessing is anything that enters into the centre of our lives and expands our capacity to be filled with Christ's love. Therefore, a blessing may not always be painless, but it will always bring spiritual growth. Being blessed does not mean being perfect, but being completed. To be blessed is not to get out of life what we think we want. Rather it is the assurance that God's purifying grace is active in us, so that our 'hidden self (may) grow strong' and 'Christ may live in (our) hearts through faith.'

In this way, we will with all the saints be 'filled with the utter fullness of God'.

We pray with Jesus

[Abwoon \(Father-Mother of the Cosmos\) – San Antonio Vocal Arts Ensemble](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DE4MIHdXIGE)

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The Aramaic Lord's Prayer, Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4

Chant composed in the ancient Dorian mode by Christopher Moroney · Improvised solo by Covita Moroney

Aramaic is a Middle Eastern language that was the native tongue of Jesus of Nazareth, and common to the Israel/Palestine region during the first century c.e. This musical setting of the prayer of Jesus—sometimes called the Lord's Prayer—includes traditional Middle Eastern percussion, rhythms, and improvisational modal chanting. All the Semitic languages — including Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic — use a root system which allows one word to hold multiple meanings. Thus, a tradition of translation arose in the Middle East that led to each word of a prophet being considered on many different levels of meaning.

Abwoon d'bvashmayo, nethqadash shmok. Te-the malkutokh. Nehwé tseby o-nokh, aykano d'bvash'mayo of -ba'r'o. Habv lan lahma d'sunqonan yow-mano, Washboqlan hawbén w'kh-t'hén, aykano dof h'nan shba-qn l'hayobén. W'lo tahlan l'nesyun'eh, elo patson men bisho. Metol d'dilok hi malkutokh, w'haylo, w'teshbuh-to lo'alam 'o-l'min. Amén.

O Birther! Father-Mother of the Cosmos,

focus your light within us. Create your reign of unity now. Your one desire then acts with ours, as in all light, so in all forms. Grant what we need each day in bread and insight. Loose the cords of mistakes binding us, as we release the strands we hold of others' guilt. Don't let surface things delude us, but free us from what holds us back.

From You is born all ruling will, the power and the life to do, the song that beautifies all, from age to age it renews. Truly—power to these statements—may they be the ground from which all our actions grow. Amen.

(Translation and commentary from Aramaic Peshitta by Neil Douglas-Klotz, from "Desert Wisdom" - ©1995 Reprinted with permission, all rights reserved, Abwoon Study Circle, www.abwoon.org)

Closing Song

[Nothing Can Trouble / Nade Te Turbe \(James Berthier/Marty Haugen – Turn My Heart\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aRsuU_3-fpk)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aRsuU_3-fpk

Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten.
Those who seek God shall never go wanting.
Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten.
God alone fills us.

But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me,
My Lord has forgotten me."
Can a woman forget her nursing child,
Or show no compassion
for the child of her womb?

Even these may forget,
 yet I will not forget you.
See, I have inscribed you
 on the palms of My hands
your walls are continually before me.

Nada te turbe, nada te espante.
Quien a Dios tiene nada la falta.
Nada te turbe, nada te espante.
Solo Dios basta.

Therefore let all who are faithful
Offer prayer to You,
at time of distress,
the rush of mighty waters shall not reach them.
You are a hiding place for me;
You preserve me from trouble;
You surround me with glad cries of deliverance.