



**Nga Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa
Sisters of Mercy New Zealand**

Mercy Day Prayer Service

This year marks 190 years since Catherine McAuley's House of Mercy in Baggot Street first opened its doors.

You may like to mark the occasion with a short ritual using some of the material outlined below. You may wish to encourage students to share the reading of the narrative, and use the suggested website resources contained in the inserted boxes, or use resources of your own.

This prayer service celebrates the Mercy story and the call for us, as Mercy schools, to care for our common home.

Choose a venue for your Mercy Day gathering which acknowledges the beauty and goodness of creation – your school may already have a dedicated sacred space outside.

Begin with a song or waiata that captures the spirit of the day.

The Mercy Story

Reader(s):

It is 190 years since Catherine McAuley first opened the doors of the House of Mercy in Baggot Street in Dublin.

Catherine McAuley lived in Ireland in the 1800s. She loved God very much, and she prayed everyday.

Catherine McAuley was sad to see so many young women had no place to live. She saw children with no clothes or shoes to wear and some children did not have enough food to eat. She also saw young women with no work, and young children too poor to go to school.

When Catherine McAuley was left an inheritance, she knew exactly what she wanted to do with the money. She built a large house in Baggot Street, in Dublin. She called the new house the House of Mercy.



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The House of Mercy was a very special house and a very busy place!

Soon other young women came to help Catherine.

Catherine and her team of helpers did a lot of things to help other people:

- They cared for children who had no parents
- They cared for young women who had no where to live
- They set up a school for poor children
- They cared for people who were sick and dying

Catherine built the House of Mercy in Baggot Street where many wealthy people lived. She did this so the wealthy people would see the poor people in their neighbourhood and realise how hard it was to live in Dublin with no money. Those wealthy people watched Catherine helping the poor, and soon some of them began to help too.

Catherine decided that she and her many helpers would become Sisters of Mercy. They wore long black gowns and hats so people knew who they were. They were different from other nuns because the Sisters of Mercy went out into the community – they became known as “the walking nuns”.

The Sisters of Mercy promised God that they would help to look after sick and poor people in their community and that they would provide education for children and young women.

Or you may like to listen to Sr Peg talking to us about Catherine McAuley: go to <http://www.mercyschools.org.nz/mercy-story/history-of-catherine-mcauley/>

And scroll down the page until you get to the video of Sr Peg (in 2 parts)



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Reader(s):

Catherine McAuley was special because she loved God so much.
She prayed and spent her time helping others and leading others to God.

Throughout her whole life, Catherine kept listening to God
and doing what God was asking her to do.

We pray:

For the model of mercy and kindness Catherine McAuley is for us –
we give thanks and pray

Response: Merciful God hear our prayer

For people who show mercy in our world –
we give thanks and pray

Response: Merciful God hear our prayer



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The Spreading of Mercy

Reader(s):

Over the last 190 years, the Mercy Order has spread around the world. Today there are Sisters of Mercy in over 40 countries, all continuing to work in the spirit of Catherine McAuley.

We give thanks for the ministries around the world that have flowed from the House of Mercy in Dublin.

We pray:

For the Sisters of Mercy on whose courage, hard work, generosity and wisdom our schools were built –
we give thanks and pray

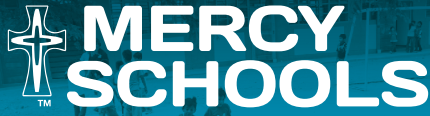
Response: Merciful God hear our prayer

For people who show mercy in our world –
we give thanks and pray

Response: Merciful God hear our prayer

You may like to learn more about the founding story of your area:

<http://www.mercyschools.org.nz/mercy-schools/>



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Mercy – Caring for our Common Home

Reader(s):

Catherine McAuley knew the cry of the poor – she was aware of how people were affected by the changing seasons, and the need to care for and share resources so everyone could enjoy the goodness of God’s creation.

Pope Francis has called on us all to care for our common home. He wrote a letter to all people around the world, asking that we take better care of the environment. Earth is God’s gift to every living creature and one that deserves our love and care.

We pray:

For those who chose to live more responsibly and use Earth’s precious resources with respect – we give thanks and pray

Response: Merciful God hear our prayer

For people who show mercy in our world – we give thanks and pray

Response: Merciful God hear our prayer

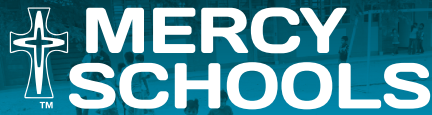
Or share with your students this about Laudato Si:

<http://www.mercyschools.org.nz/wp-mercy-schools/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Laudato-Si.pdf>

Pope Francis said “I am convinced that we can make a difference”.

How can we help?

– invite your students to come up with some practical ways they can help to care for our common home



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Mercy in Aotearoa

Reader(s):

Nga Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa Sisters of Mercy of New Zealand also call us to listen to the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth.

As a Mercy School in Aotearoa, let us work together to use our resources wisely to enrich other lives, especially those who have little of their own.

You may like to pray together our Mercy Schools “Prayer for Our Earth”;
With the powerpoint presentation kindly provided by Annette Woodhead,
DRS at St Joseph’s School, Takapuna, Auckland

[A prayer for our earth](#) (PPT)

Or download the printable version of “Prayer for Our Earth”:

[A prayer for our earth](#) (PDF)

We pray:

E te Atua o te Atawhai God of Mercy
We find you not only in the vastness and beauty of our universe,
but in ourselves and in all forms of life
May the blessing of God surround us
May wisdom and justice give us strength
May we be wise and creative
May we together share the mission of mercy
Make us guardians of your creation, caring with love
for our common home and for all that lives within it.

Amen