

## Mercy Day

As we celebrate Mercy Day later this month, we are invited to look again at the life of Catherine McAuley and how we might take inspiration from her example to walk our own paths of mercy and compassion.

Madeline Duckert reminds us that:

*Catherine McAuley was a busy woman! She would have been at home in the twenty-first century of busyness and high activity. She was able to hold many roles at once and give each its due attention – administrator of a growing business; superior of a brand-new religious community; novice mistress; poet; fun-maker in her community; visitor of the sick and dying; negotiator with bishops, architects and politicians ... (2005. The Mystical Heart of Catherine McAuley. Sisters of Mercy: Melbourne. 9).*

What would Catherine say to us today about facing the busyness and complexity of life?

- **Take opportunities to have fun ...** *Being of a remarkably cheerful disposition she loved to see all under her charge cheerful and happy. She tried to make them so, not only by removing whatever could disturb their peace, but also by contributing to the general cheerfulness of the community especially at recreation (The Limerick Manuscript, in Mary C Sullivan rsm. 1995. Catherine McAuley and the Tradition of Mercy. University of Notre Dame du Lac. 179).*
- **Don't get carried away with rules and structures ...** *Her intention was for her Sisters to live together in a simple, God-centred way of life, without too many internal structures (Mary C Bourke rsm. 1987. A Woman Sings of Mercy. E.J. Dwyer: Sydney. 50).*
- **Invest in people...** *One of Catherine's great gifts as leader, almost so close to us to be easily taken for granted, and yet an inestimable gift, was her ability to create and foster bonds between her first companions. She was a connector of people (Mary Wickham. rsm. 2004. Storms and Teacups in Listen Vol 22. No.1. 19).*

- **Face every day with faith and determination...** *even when her strength and stamina were ebbing (Catherine) was able to embrace new ventures with courage, resolution and enthusiasm and yet in a very humanely appealing way while staking her utter confidence on the providence of God (Mary Reynolds rsm. 2009. Support Me All the Day Long. Listen. Vol. 27. No. 2. 20).*
- **Respect differences...** *Everyplace has its own particular ideas and feelings which must be yielded to when possible (quoted in Mary Wickham rsm. 2004. Storms and Teacups. Listen. Vol 22. No. 1. 23).*
- **Bring out the best in those you meet everyday...** *One of Catherine's pre-eminent gifts as a leader was her ability to bring out the best in her companions. She seems to have been able to foster the unique gifts of each person, to extend their reach, and to impart confidence in them, enabling them to take on tasks they might have shrunk from... (Mary Wickham rsm. Storms and Teacups. Listen. Vol 22. No. 1. 22).*

Our path of mercy is blessed by those who walk with us in our work, family and community. Catherine McAuley reminds us that we can build communities of mercy through our encouragement, support and empowerment of others.



Reflections: How could your ministry be described as a community of mercy?

We acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners of the lands on which our ministries exist and the Elders both past and present on whose land we walk, work and live. We support the Uluru Statement from the Heart.