

Foundation Day 2023



For Foundation Day 2023 -we offer a selection of readings and questions for reflection below:

Candle, Mercy Cross, Images of Mercy Ministry as centrepiece

Quiet reflective music or hymn of choice to gather in

New Beginnings:

December 12th, 1831 was a day of new beginnings for Mercy. Earlier that day Catherine McAuley, Anna Maria Doyle and Elizabeth professed their vows as the first Sisters of Mercy. Catherine vowed:

“I, Sister Catherine McAuley, called in religion Mary Catherine do vow and promise to God perpetual Poverty, \chastity and Obedience and to persevere until the end of my life in the congregation called of the Sisters of Mercy, established for the visitation of the sick poor, and protection and instruction of poor females.... (Sullivan ed. Correspondence Letter 12)

Reflection

Take some time to revisit the day that you committed yourself to Mercy be it as a Sister, an Associate or a Ministry Companion....

The Journey to Foundation Day:

Catherine's journey to founding a congregation of religious sisters was a "decision which was for her the most demanding but unanticipated decision of her life" (Sullivan The Path of Mercy pg 91)

Reading: An extract from a letter of Mary Ann Doyle to Mary Clare Augustine Moore, 1844:

"We had much consolation in the support and kindness which the Revd. gentlemen of St. Teresa's Church always envinced for the establishment, particularly the Very Revd. Redmond O'Hanlon. The House was still getting on wonderfully— school, House of Mercy, and the poor sick all well attended to, sisters increasing.

It was then considered things could not be permanently settled unless some served a regular noviciate. The obstacles to Revd. Mother's becoming a religious were now removed. Application was made to Rome for permission to serve a Noviceship in an enclosed order, which was granted and thought to be a great favour. We had then 12 sisters. Application was made to George's Hill. They kindly consented to receive us.

On the 8th of September 1830 we left Baggot St. The Sister chosen to come with [us] was a saintly creature. Revd. Mother went through her noviciate in a most edifying manner; her cheerfulness was the admiration of all, tho' she had much care on her mind, still directing Baggot St., and suffered much from a disease of the gums during the time.

For some time, she was treated with indulgence and respect, but a change of Superiors taking place, she was put under a young and very strict Mistress of Novices. She then went through every humble duty with pleasure, assisted me in the sacristy, swept, served in refectory, and every other humble office.

Our Noviceship was severe, being only one year.....There was some difficulty regarding our profession as our vows could not be the same as these made by the community. They submitted the difficulty to Most Revd. Dr. Murray, who removed it by the form of vow which he proposed. He came himself some time before our profession and examined us, particularly on our profession in the new order "we are about to erect called of the Sisters of Mercy."

The profession took place on the 12th of December 1831. The reception and profession should have been on the feast of the Conception but being the feast day of the Church of the Conception, his Grace could not attend. Soo after the ceremony we returned to Baggot St accompanied by

Soon after the ceremony we returned to Baggot St. accompanied by Revd. Dr. Blake who said as we were coming that the Order of Mercy should be dated from that day. Before we left the convent, he, in the presence of the Superioress, congratulated us on the manner in which we spent our noviciate, what edification we had given, and hoped we would infuse the same spirit to those to whom we were returning".

Reflection:

What started you on your journey to Mercy?

Recall the twists and turns in your own journey – what sustained you? What sustains you now?

Our life in Mercy

Ephesians 4:1-6

I therefore beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

Intercessions:

Our response is "Compassionate God, pour out your mercy upon them."

For those most vulnerable to oppression or neglect, especially women and children, we pray: [R]

For all who seek a kind word, a gentle compassionate look or the patient hearing of their sorrows, we pray: [R]

For the poor, the sick, and those in need of knowledge and wisdom, we pray: [R]

For our sisters, associates, partners in ministry, friends and benefactors throughout the world, that on this feast we may experience our oneness in Mercy, we pray: [R]

For peace in our world, for all who are in danger: we pray: [R]

