

CATHERINE MCAULEY



The woman I want to speak about this week is Catherine. Like Anna and Elizabeth she knew what it was to wait. She waited fifty two years before God, through Archbishop Murray, asked her to enter the Novitiate in George's Hill for formation in the religious life. Of course, all her life was a preparation for this moment and she did it because she had come to believe it was the only way to ensure the continuity of her Works of Mercy to the poor.

Reading: *Rule, Ch. 1, art. 2; Retreat Instructions*

The Sisters whom God has graciously pleased to call to this state of perfection shall animate their zeal and fervour by the example of their Divine Master, Jesus Christ Who has testified on all occasions to a tender love for the poor and has declared that He would consider as done to Himself whatever should be done unto them.

Imitate the sanctity of Jesus Christ...The life and maxims of Jesus Christ should be as a book always open before us from which we are to learn...as a glass in which we will clearly see our defects and as a seal whose image we are to impress upon our hearts...Try so to act at all times and in all places that if our Divine Lord were to appear on earth again, he might not be ashamed to point you out as persons intimately united with Him and nearly (closely) allied to Him.

Meditation

Catherine, these words to your Sisters were culled from a life-long, lived experience... At your father's knee you learned to respect each person...He treated the poor with special love and taught you to do the same...He died when you were only five and you experienced great sadness for the first time...But he had done his work well and you never forgot the poor... But you had to wait ...You knew early what displacement meant.... Your mother Elinor couldn't manage business very well and soon had lost all the family's fortune...Then you had to become dependent on the charity of others...You were horrified at the remorse endured by your mother on her death-bed because she had been careless about nurturing the faith in her children...You carried a great fear of dying all through your life...You moved from family to family and watched with great sadness as your brother, James and your sister, Mary abandoned their faith...But you had the comfort of Mary returning to her faith before she died... You sought out holy priests who encouraged you and helped you to hold your own against mockery and ridicule of your faith.... Yet you had to wait. You spent twenty years with the Callaghan family where you deepened your love of the Word of God ...Your qualities as a spiritual leader and teacher were prayerfully quarried from Scripture...And with the Callaghan's blessing you tended, with great love, the poor and needy.... You taught them the tenets of their faith and cared for them with love...You saw Catherine Callaghan and her husband, William convert to Catholicism....Now was the time...You built Baggot Street for the poor from the inheritance you received from the Callaghans...You pricked the consciences of the rich to help their poorer neighbours...You showed your sisters how to love, to pray and to live....Your currency was prayer...You identified with 'the humbled, abandoned, agonising Christ'...Yet the stark realism of Calvary was infused with the hope of the Resurrection....You and your walking nuns went where there was hunger and pain...You said you would rather be cold and hungry than that the poor should be deprived of any consolation in your power to afford them...You met challenges with faith and trust but you were human enough to be sometimes deeply hurt.... You wore yourself out in your wish to bring Christ to those you served...You, without knowing it were an empire builder who initiated a world-wide conquest by carrying only the weapons of faith, hope, and love... At the end you welcomed death with open arms and conveyed to your sisters the certain hope of eternal life...You bequeathed to your sisters the legacy of love... And you looked to their comfort...You had the Irish grace of tenderness and your hand was (and is) on the latch of every heart... It is a great thing to be a Sister of Mercy!

Prayer: Catherine's Suscipe

My God I am Yours
for time and eternity,

Teach me to cast myself entirely
into the arms of
Your loving Providence
with the most lively, unlimited
confidence in your
compassionate, tender pity.

Grant me,
O most merciful Redeemer,
that whatever
You ordain or permit
may be acceptable to me.

Take from my heart all painful anxiety;
suffer nothing to sadden me but sin,
nothing to delight me but the hope
of coming to the possession of You,
my God and my all,
in Your everlasting kingdom.

Amen!