



“A great prophet has
appeared among us;
God has visited the
people!”

Greeting

O compassionate and merciful God, in the presence of Mary our Mother, we acknowledge Your greatness and tenderness

Merciful Jesus, You have touched the lives of each of Your people with gentleness and Love, for this we praise You.

Inspiring and sanctifying Spirit, shine out with a new glow on our faith-filled Mercy Congregation today.

Doxology

Glory and praise to you our God. We proclaim your timeless and eternal goodness as our Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier. May your name and praise be declared through all ages and nations now and forever Amen.

Hymn

Christ be our Light (from the CD *There is a Season* by Monica Butler RSM, Institute England. www.jhmusic.com); or hymn of choice to Our Lady

Ant

We give thanks for your merciful love, O God, and praise you with Mary our Mother in Mercy for Your great tenderness and compassion.

Psalm 29 *In praise of God*

Give to God, O heavenly beings,
Give to God glory and strength.
Give to God the glory of his name;
worship God in holy splendour.

The voice of God is over the waters;
God of glory thunders,
God, over mighty waters.
The voice of God is powerful;
the voice of God is full of majesty.

The voice of God breaks the cedars;
God breaks the cedars of Lebanon.
Our God makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
and Sirion like a young wild ox.

The voice of God flashes forth flames of fire.
The voice of God shakes the wilderness;
God shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

The voice of God causes the oaks to whirl,
and strips the forest bare;
and in God's temple all say, "Glory!"
God sits enthroned over the flood;
God sits enthroned forever.

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Canticle

Suscipe (No 12 on Monica Butler's CD: *There is a season*. www.jhmusic.com; or any version of Venerable Catherine's words).

Scripture

Luke 7: 7-13

Jesus went to a city called Nain, and the disciples and a great crowd followed. When he got near to the city gates, it happened that a dead man was being carried out for burial, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. A considerable number of the townspeople were with her.

And when Jesus saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep."

And he went over and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I tell you to get up."

Everyone was filled with awe and praised God saying: "A great prophet has appeared among us; God has visited the people!"

Reflection

A second group appeared on the tragic scene: Jesus, his disciples and a huge following of people. Without invitation, the original group found itself engulfed as it tried to pass through the city gates. Its privacy had been invaded.

They ignored the intrusion and struggled on.

This only served to accentuate their grief and to create further insecurity.

Nobody spoke as they pressed ahead.

The stranger at the head of the intruders struggled through to the chief mourner.

She was a widow overwhelmed with grief, loss, anguish, feelings of isolation and emptiness.

Compassionately, he greeted her, "Do not weep."

Before she had time to respond, and ignoring the ritual contamination that he would sustain as a result of making physical contact with a dead body, he touched the bier saying:

"Young man, I tell you to get up."

Suddenly the scene changed!

The place

the people and

the purpose of the original gathering was transformed in an instant:

anguish was replaced by awe

emerging embarrassment by Eucharist

dejection by delight

isolation by intimacy

misery by mercy



mourning by merriment
pity by praise
resignation by rejoicing
turmoil by tranquility, and
void by vision

In Jesus, God had visited the people in a most profoundly touching and moving way.
The One who loved unconditionally demonstrated how unconditional his ministry of mercy was.
Without any request from the grieving for a miracle;
without any profession of faith,
statement of hope, or
proclamation of love,
Jesus poured mercy on a heartbroken widow, a stranger –
whose ethnicity went unquestioned
but whose grief and loss were very evident, he showered compassion.
Mercy triumphed, hope was restored, faith was enhanced and love liberated.

Once again there was a future to be embraced with gratitude and joy.
A new focus had emerged:
Life would now be lived with greater intensity, gratitude, compassion and empathy.

The only true God who is Mercy and Compassion
would be praised and thanked wherever the Good News of Jesus Christ would be proclaimed
throughout the world for all generations and forever.

O God of mercy and compassion,
when I am tempted to wrap myself in my 'widows weeds' help me to look holistically and objectively
at my life and to allow this Gospel passage to challenge me.
Empower me so that I may realise that you do not reside in:
my metaphorical bier
self-pity or self-righteousness,
regrets, grievances or self-imposed and nurtured depression. No.
You are, instead, to be found reaching out from my Baptismal robe which made me your child,
a royal heir and a member of a priestly and prophetic people.

Enable me to see beyond the selfishness of self,
to look with compassion on those who are genuinely bereaved, poor, oppressed, isolate, ill or
alienated in any way, and
to follow the example of Jesus in bringing: awe, Eucharist, delight, intimacy, merriment, praise,
rejoicing, serenity, tranquility and vision to my own inner life first, and then,
to the lives of my Mercy Family and to all those I meet as I join you, anew, in entering our shared 'city
of Nain'.

Pause for contemplation



Prayers of Praise and thanksgivings

Resp to Intercession – We praise you, O God; in joy and thanksgiving we praise you.

For your goodness to us, O Provident and Good God through all the events of our life **R/**

For the mercy and inspiration which we have experienced from the Leadership in our Church **R/**

For all those wonderfully compassionate, generous and faith-filled women and men who journey with us in today's 'city of Nain' **R/**

For civil leaders whose faith and moral values enable them to put the needs of others before personal gain and prospects of promotion **R/**

For all the members of our Mercy Family who spend their lives in the ministry of witness and proclamation **R/**

For ourselves, our families, friends and all those who need our prayers or for whom we have promised on this Mercy Day to pray **R/**

For the new Board of Mercy International and for all those who are supporting them in their efforts to renew our mercy vision and to bring new life to Venerable Catherine's dream **R/**

For the members of the team at Fraynetwork in gratitude for their ministry to all Sisters of Mercy and Associates internationally **R/**

For all those congregations who are celebrating special milestones in ministry this year; and especially for the Community in Edinburgh for their fidelity to witness and proclamation over the past one hundred and fifty years **R/**

For all our dead Sisters, Associates, family member and friends who spent their lives in witness and proclamation and on whose shoulders we stand in mercy today **R/**

Concluding Prayer

Provident and Merciful God,

You revealed the wonder of your power by restoring an only son to a broken and widowed mother. May the praise and thanksgiving which this miraculous and compassionate act stirs up in us draw us ever closer to you and to the needs of all those whom you entrust to our care as we strive to live out our mercy charism. We make this prayer through the intercession of Mary our Mother, Venerable Catherine our patron, and in union with you our Creator, Redeemer and Merciful Guide. Amen

Blessing

All honour, praise and veneration to our God who is Mercy

Praise and thanksgiving be to Jesus Christ, our Compassionate Redeemer, who nourishes us with the Eucharist Blessing ✠ and unending praise and honour to the Holy Spirit, our inspiration and guide as we journey together in prayer, and in trying to demonstrate, through Mercy, that God has visited and continues to journey compassionately with humanity. Amen.

