

USE THIS REFLECTION TO REFLECT ON
AND DISCUSS THE KEY ELEMENTS OF MERCY LEADERSHIP

Mercy Leadership Reflection

Key Elements of Mercy Leadership

MERCY

Catherine McAuley describes mercy as '... the principal path of Jesus Christ to those desirous of following him' (Original Rule in Mary Sullivan rsm. *The Path of Mercy*. 297) Looking to the life and teaching of Jesus, Catherine McAuley learned the meaning of mercy as openness to the suffering of others and a willingness to walk with them. She went out to those made poor, the lonely, the sick, the uneducated, the women at risk, the homeless. Wherever the need called, Catherine responded with a compassionate and merciful heart.

We, like Catherine, are called to be merciful leaders.

- Where have you practised mercy in your leadership?
- Take a moment to consider how you can be a more merciful leader.

HOSPITALITY AND WELCOMING HEART

Catherine McAuley was a woman of open and welcoming heart. She was always inclusive. She helped those who came to the House of Mercy each day and she went out in service to those in need. Catherine put no restrictions on her work of mercy, all were included in her loving outreach. To her Mercy welcomes '...the ungrateful again and again and is never weary of pardoning them' (Familiar Instructions).

We, like Catherine, are called to be leaders with welcoming hearts.

- When have you looked for opportunities to practise inclusion and welcome?
- Take a moment to consider how you can be a more welcoming leader.

CONCERN FOR THOSE MADE POOR

Catherine McAuley felt the pain of those who had not been treated with respect and who were trapped in a web of poverty and disadvantage. She gave freely from her own resources to help others. For Catherine Jesus was present in all people, including the marginalised and vulnerable, the unprotected and violated. Catherine was a Gospel woman who daily lived the mandate 'whatever you do to the least of my sisters and brothers' (Matthew 25:40).

We, like Catherine, are called to act on behalf of those who are disadvantaged.

- Where are the unmet needs in your community?
- Take a moment to discern where you can act for those who struggle, in your leadership.

KINDNESS AND HUMILITY

Catherine McAuley writes: 'Sisters of Mercy should be particularly kind, the kindest people of earth, with the tenderest pity and compassion for the poor' (Familiar Instructions 13). 'For Catherine leadership is not about shining moments. She had a great dislike for noise and display in the performance of duties' (Mary Sullivan rsm. 2003. *Catherine McAuley's Priorities as Leader: Her Instructions and Care for the Future*).

She advised her sisters to adopt a simple style of speaking and writing, to be a loving presence, a listening ear and a patient hearer of sorrows.

We, like Catherine, are called to be humble leaders who practice kindness in the everyday.

- When do you show kindness in your leadership?
- Take a moment to reflect on Catherine's call to be a sacrament of loving presence to all we meet.

EDUCATION

Catherine McAuley set up schools to educate girls to enable them to rise from poverty and live with dignity. She opened training centres to empower women with the skills to support their families. Her life was a lesson in mercy and kindness. Catherine believed that we learn more by example than pious words. She was committed to the formation of her sisters through collaborative leadership, sharing vision, her written and spoken words, taking time for reflection and reinforcement of their common purpose.

We, like Catherine McAuley, are called to be educators, people who inspire others to live full lives.

- What are the education needs in your community?
- Take a moment to consider the areas in your Mercy ministry which need stronger formation opportunities to develop strong Mercy culture and vision.