

Engaging

Read the Mercy reflection on Service carefully and highlight the words, phrases or ideas that speak to you.

Read all the scripture passages from the Mercy reflection on Service.

What do the scripture passages and the words of Catherine McAuley reveal to you about the nature of the Gospel's call to service?

Reflecting

Take a moment to reflect on your understanding of what "to serve" means?

In relation to your response, recall at least three examples of the times when you were of service to others and how it moved you.

Acting

Service is a Gospel value about honouring God and others.

What are your gifts and talents and how can you employ them in the service of others?

Jesus modelled honourable servant leadership. How can you live the Gospel call to service:

- at home
- at school
- at work
- in community groups?

Growing

Service enriches you and enriches community and Church. How?

How do you grow personally from this?



Mercy Education Values



SERVICE



Mercy Education
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Service

Service of God and of Jesus Christ through service of others is at the heart of the originating Mercy story. "It is Jesus Christ you love and serve with your whole heart," wrote Catherine McAuley. Catherine insisted that the Institute was "founded on Calvary, there to serve a crucified Redeemer." For Catherine and for those who joined her in 19th century Dublin, living and witnessing to the mystery of the cross meant pooling their resources and seeking out the most vulnerable. Catherine and her companions knew what it meant to be lifted up on the cross of service. Theirs was to be a willing service: "It is God's will that everyone called to [God's] service should be happy."

The people of Israel were called to serve God wholeheartedly (Deut 10:12; Josh 22:5; 1 Samuel 13:4; Psalm 100:2). Jesus understood his

own God-given mission in terms of such service of God and of others. He came "not to be served but to serve" and to give life (Mark 9:35//Matt 20:28) and that is what he asked of those who followed him (Mark 10:45; John 12:26). He was among them "as one who serves" (Luke 22:26). While all are called to service, the gospel stories of service or ministry (diakonia) are only about the women who serve or minister (Mark 1:31 and 15:40-41; Matt 8:15 and 27:55; Luke 10:40). In Luke's gospel, the women who follow Jesus all the way from Galilee to Jerusalem are said to provide or minister from their own resources (Luke 8:3). The Lukan ideal, as expressed in Luke's second volume, is to share one's resources so that no one might be in need (Acts 4:32), a lesson Catherine took to heart.

Ironically, the post-resurrection stories of service or ministry are almost exclusively stories of men such as Peter and Paul who proclaimed the gospel "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). There are stories of women such as Tabitha and Lydia who serve but their service or ministry is generally subordinated to that of the men (Acts 9:36-42; 16:13-16). One of the exceptions to this is Priscilla whose name is listed before that of her husband Aquila in the story of their theological

education of Apollos (18:18, 26), indicating at least an equal role for her in the ministry or service of teaching.

Leaders, in particular, must be at the service of the community: "...the greatest among you must become like the youngest and the leader like one who serves" (Luke 22:26). John's story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet (John 13) is a powerful witness to the meaning of servant leadership in particular and of Christian service in general. Jesus' action is explicitly offered as an example for all to follow: no service is too lowly for the master and no service is too lowly for those who follow the way of the gospel.

To engage in service on behalf of God's people is to "build up the body of Christ" (Eph 4:12). To serve others is to offer thanksgiving to God (2 Cor 9:12-13). To "serve one another with whatever gift each has received" is to be a good steward of God's many gifts (1 Peter 4:10). To serve with our whole hearts is to love the spirit of Catherine.

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