

Engaging

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

Read the following texts:

- Deut 10:18-19
- 1 Peter 4:9
- Rom 12:13
- Heb 13:2
- Matt 25: 31-46
- Luke 10:25-37
- Luke 24:13-33

What do the scripture passages and the words of Catherine McAuley reveal to you about the nature of God's hospitality?

Reflecting

Take a moment to make yourself comfortable and allow yourself to be still.

Recall a time when you had a new beginning, eg, school, sporting team, new job and when you were a stranger. What hospitality was extended to you and how did you feel welcomed?

When you had the opportunity to extend hospitality to someone new, what did you do and how did you feel?

Catherine said, "You must waste time with visitors". What does this mean for you?

Acting

Being kind, generous and welcoming to our friends, family and those we know is easy. It takes courage to welcome the stranger.

Identify the "stranger" in my class, my school or my community. In what ways will you be hospitable to that person?

How can you challenge yourself and others to remove the barriers that stop us extending hospitality to others such as:

- asylum seekers
- refugees
- our Indigenous
- the homeless
- the outcast?

Growing

When we open the door to hospitality, we open the door to our heart.

In what ways can you grow or nurture your heart so that your hospitality is genuine?

Research the Corporal Works of Mercy to grow in your understanding of hospitality as people of Mercy.



Mercy Education Values



HOSPITALITY



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Hospitality



Hospitality is about opening one's home and heart to those who need a place to belong. The construction and opening of a house of hospitality for the poor of early 19th century Dublin marked the beginning of a Mercy movement that was to extend across the globe and touch the hearts of countless women, men, and children for almost two centuries. It was made possible by the hospitality and generosity of Catherine McAuley's hosts who bequeathed to Catherine a substantial inheritance. Catherine realised her long-held dream by providing a home for young women at risk. She looked not for gratitude, but simply to provide education and a better life for the grateful and ungrateful alike. "Mercy receives the ungrateful again and again, and is never weary in pardoning them," she was to write.

A key mercy word to be found repeatedly in the Hebrew scriptures is *hesed*. It is a mercy word that is often associated with hospitality, denoting right relationship between host and guest. In the Greek Bible it is translated from Hebrew in a variety of ways, with words that mean mercy, works of mercy, grace and even justice in the sense of right relationship. Again and again in the biblical tradition, God is the hospitable host who provides a home for all Earth's creatures, and specifically for a people enslaved or exiled. Again and again, the people of Israel are reminded of the hospitality of their God. They are urged to open their homes, their hearts, and their produce to neighbours and to those who seek protection: the stranger, the widow and the orphan. In Deuteronomy, the God of Israel "executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and...loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing." In this context, the people are told, "You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Deut 10:18-19). They are not to forget their own experience as strangers in need of a home.

In his first letter, Peter takes up this same theme when he tells his addressees to "be hospitable to one another without complaining" (1 Pet 4:9). The Greek word for hospitable literally means loving to the stranger or outsider. Paul reminds the community in Rome to "extend hospitality to strangers" (Rom 12:13). The letter to the Hebrews evokes the story of Abraham and Sarah's exceptional hospitality in relation to three strangers who turn out to be God's messengers: "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it" (Heb 13:2).

Hospitality is at the heart of some of the most memorable of the gospel stories, such as Matthew's final judgment story (Matt 25: 31-46) or Luke's story of the man who fell among robbers and experienced both the extravagant hospitality of a stranger and the powerful healing effects of Earth's produce, the oil and the wine (Luke 10:25-37). Luke recounts another wonderful story of hospitality extended to a stranger who is finally recognised by his hosts "in the breaking of the bread" (Luke 24:13-33). We too might recognise that stranger as we break bread with one another and with those who seek refuge in our midst.

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