

Culture of Kindness

Introductory Prayer

“Catherine McAuley built a culture of kindness through her example, her words of encouragement, her capacity to forgive and her genuine interest in every sister and every person she encountered in the course of her day.” (Be As Shining Lamps, p. 52)

If you are a stone thrown by the sure hand of kindness into a pool,
you may not know the full extent nor even glimpse
your widest ripples as they circle and spread
and find themselves lapping the feet of one or two
or three unknown to you on a far shore.
You may not know the circles you make and the water you grace
but make them you will and grace you have been
by the hand of the One who gave you water.

(Mary Wickham, RSM, 2021, “Being the Bird,” found in *Be As Shining Lamps* p. 13)

Scripture: Matthew 14: 13-21

When Jesus heard of it, he withdrew in a boat to a deserted place by himself. The crowds heard of this and followed him on foot from their towns. When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, and he cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples approached him and said, “This is a deserted place and it is already late; dismiss the crowds so that they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves.” [Jesus] said to them, “There is no need for them to go away; give them some food yourselves.” But they said to him, “Five loaves and two fish are all we have here.” Then he said, “Bring them here to me,” and he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking* the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the crowds. They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up the fragments left over*—twelve wicker baskets full. Those who ate were about five thousand men, not counting women and children.

General Intercessions

- ∞ That all members of the Church may embody the kindness of Christ in their words and actions, becoming signs of hope and healing in a divided world.

We pray to the Lord. Lord, make us instruments of Your kindness.

- ∞ That those in positions of authority may lead with compassion, humility, and a genuine concern for the dignity of every person.

We pray to the Lord. Lord, make us instruments of Your kindness.

- ∞ That we may build cultures of kindness, inspired by the example of Catherine McAuley, where forgiveness is offered freely and every person is treated with respect and care.

We pray to the Lord. Lord, make us instruments of Your kindness.

- ∞ That those who feel isolated, rejected, or burdened may encounter the gentle presence of God through the kindness of others.

We pray to the Lord. Lord, make us instruments of Your kindness.

- ∞ That we may grow in the grace to speak with encouragement, act with mercy, and see each person as beloved by God.

We pray to the Lord. Lord, make us instruments of Your kindness.

- ∞ That we may continue Catherine McAuley's legacy by living lives rooted in kindness, service, and love.

We pray to the Lord. Lord, make us instruments of Your kindness.

Reflection:

Catherine McAuley and Jesus exemplify kindness in their intentional responses to the needs of others without delay. Both show that true kindness is active and selfless, offered freely to meet the needs of others.

Showing kindness is a conscious choice we make to serve and uplift others. *How will you show kindness in the encounters of your day?*

Closing Prayer

Dear God,

You are the Giver of all good things. You receive our humble offerings – our time, our gifts, our hearts – and in Your grace, You bless and multiply them to bring healing and hope to the world. Thank You for choosing to work in us and through us, inviting us into the mystery of Your miracles, and for transforming even the smallest act of love into something holy.

As we journey in faith, may we be inspired by Catherine McAuley, whose life radiated kindness through her encouraging words, her forgiving heart, and her deep, genuine care for every person she met.

May her legacy of compassion shape our own actions, so that we, too, may become vessels of Your mercy and love. Teach us to give generously, love wholeheartedly, and serve with joy.

In Jesus' name we pray,
Amen.