

# Service

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Dear Prayer Leader,

Thank-you for leading this prayer on the charism of Service.

A charism is like a living gift. It is a way of living or doing, inspired by Jesus, which links us to God. As you pray with your staff, we hope that you will develop a clearer appreciation of how each charism can impact on your life and the lives of those around you.

In this prayer module, your charism is linked to the spirituality of Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy and to the prayer style of Traditional Prayers.

## Gathering

Each prayer starts with a brief ritual that serves to engage and focus everyone on the spirit of the prayer. As well as being a means of focusing your staff, it is also a way to add another level of meaning and understanding to the charism.

**For this prayer ask all your staff to bring a coffee mug, tea cup or their glass to the prayer.**

Catherine McAuley was known for her hospitality towards guests and visitors and the ritual of always offering a cup of tea. Placing our cups into the prayer space is a simple way of acknowledging the value of service within our workplaces.

## Reading and Reflection

The reading is John 13:4-10, 12-17. The reflection material invites us to consider what it means to be people of 'service' to others.

## Prayer

The prayer style involves praying the traditional prayer of the Hail Mary. You may wish to substitute this for any other prayer you prefer.

## Surprises

Add to the experience of the prayer by continuing to bring your prayer's charism to people's attention during the week. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

- *Have tea and coffee brewed and ready on the table for staff at morning tea.*
- *Hand deliver biscuits for all staff doing morning teas duties.*
- *Send each staff member a personalised thank-you note.*

The structure and ideas we have included are just suggestions. Please feel free to modify or add to the wording to make the experience more personal and relevant for your staff. Adding your own touches will not only make the experience more enriching for you personally, but also for the rest of your staff.

# Service

## ***We Gather***

God who serves,  
You lead us on life's journey  
As we gather here in Your name,  
Open our *ears* to hear Your voice.  
Open our *hands* to Your work.  
And open our *hearts* to Your Spirit.

*Amen*



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## ***We Listen***

*Jesus got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' Jesus answered, 'You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' Peter said to him, 'You will never wash my feet.' Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.' Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!' Jesus said to him, 'One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.'*

*After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.'*

John 13: 4-10, 12-17

## ***We Respond***

In whom have you seen servant leadership modelled very powerfully?

What was most challenging in your experience about this kind of leadership?

Take the opportunity to have a cup of tea with someone on staff this week.

## ***We Pray***

As we go about our day O God,  
As we strive to walk with Jesus as people of service,  
Remind us that we are the face of Christ,  
Who is with us always.

May your grace, mercy and peace,  
Bless us, keep us and transform us all,  
This day, now and forever.

Amen

## ***Words of Wisdom***

"It is for God we serve the poor, not for thanks."

**Catherine McAuley**

"Be alert to give service. What counts a great deal in life is what we do for others."

**Anonymous**

## **Service**

### **Using the notes:**

*Sections to be read by the leader are marked with **Leader:** at the beginning.*

*Texts in bold type are notes and guiding information for leaders and provide a guide for what to do or say.*

### **Resources:**

*Handout sheets*

*Coffee/tea cups & glasses (staff to bring)*

*Head, Heart, Hands candles*

*Staff candle*

*Matches*

*Prayer intentions book*

### **Setting up for prayer:**

- *Prepare a prayerful space suitable for your staff to gather around. Have ready...*
  - *The 'Head', 'Hands' & 'Heart' candles to light in the opening prayer.*
  - *Your staff candles.*
  - *The prayer intentions book.*
- *Have the 'Quickfire Prayer Cards' ready to distribute at the end of the prayer time.*
- *Have your handout sheets close by*
- *Staff have been reminded to bring a cup/mug/glass*
- *Organise someone to read the scripture passage*

## **We Gather**

### **Leader:**

Our prayer journey this week invites us to walk with Jesus in service.

Jesus showed us through his life that it is possible to both serve and to lead.

Whether it is our classroom, our staff room, the office or our home, we are called by Jesus to serve to others.

Catherine McAuley, founder of the Sisters of Mercy, understood well the union of service and leadership.

Catherine and her sisters were known for their hospitality; the simple cup of tea became a symbol of welcome and service.

Through this simple gesture of welcome, even today, the sisters are able to gently convey a recognition of their calling to service.

I invite you to place into our prayer space your coffee cup, teacup or glass as a sign of your willingness to put hospitality before business, others before self and to listen for Jesus' call to service, as we journey this week in his footsteps.

*(Staff place cups/ glasses into prayer space)*

## **Opening Prayer**

### **Leader:**

As we gather, let us begin with the sign of the cross.

God of service,  
You lead us on life's journey.

As we gather here in Your name,  
Open our minds to know Your voice.  
Open our hands to do Your work.  
And open our hearts to hold Your Spirit.

*(Light 'head' candle)*  
*(Light 'hands' candle)*  
*(Light 'heart' candle)*

Amen

## **We Listen**

### **Scripture**

**Leader:**     *Invite someone to proclaim the Word*

**A reading from Luke 22:24-27** (JB)

*An argument also began between them about who should be reckoned the greatest; but Jesus said to them,*

*'Among the gentiles it is the kings who lord over them, and those who have authority over them are given the title Benefactor. With you this must not happen. No! The greatest among you must behave as if he were the youngest, the leader as if he was the one who serves. For who is the greater? The one at table or the one who serves? The one at table, surely? Yet here I am among you as the one who serves!'*

## ***Jesus calls us to walk with Service***

### ***Leader:***

Within our school we are all called to be Leader; in our classrooms, to the children in our care, to each other. As leaders in a Christian context we can ask ourselves how this might differ to leadership in the corporate world; leadership in other educational contexts.

Jesus' leadership was different for his day – and for our day too. As a leader his eye was always on the sparrow. Always he looked for the perspective of the least among the group.

He was clear about his vision; of what he was on about; he modeled it; he encouraged leadership in others.

This was not the top-down hierarchical style. Instead, he emphasised collaboration, trust, empathy, and an ethical use of power.

Being a leader who follows Jesus means we must understand service; that leadership is not about lording it over others; nor is it about being a doormat; but rather rising to our own potential and reflecting the value of others back to them. In our work we should always be mindful of opportunities to lead in this way

As educators we are called to leadership in Christ, and so we are called to service in all the richness of its meaning.

As we leave this room and move about our school let us be mindful of this call to servant leadership -to build trust, to provide protection, to be just, to act with compassion, to be a welcoming presence.

### **Leader:**

There are a few minutes of quiet time now to think about what we have just listened to and to spend some time considering the questions for reflection on our handout sheets.

# ***We Respond***

## ***Reflections***

In whom have you seen servant leadership modelled very powerfully?

What was most challenging in your experience about this kind of leadership?

Take the opportunity to have a cup of tea with someone on staff this week.

## *Individual Prayer*

### ***Leader:***

Our prayer this week is an invitation to Marian prayer.

Today, we will take one prayer, traced back to the earliest Christian communities, reflecting the gospel and the growth of the Church's understanding of Mary as first disciple and mother of him whom they came to recognise as the Christ.

Her life journey challenged her to the depth of her being. While we know little of the depth of the detail of how her journey unfolded, we do know the things that marked it: faith, courage, deepest joy, deepest pain, sustaining hope. Mary was there at the beginning – and also there at the end. And she is now part of the great communion of saints.

As Catholics we have a long tradition of prayer to Mary and the many names for Mary in our story is reflected in many of our school names – such as Mater Dei, Star of the Sea, Our Lady of Mt Carmel, Queen of Apostles, (*insert your school's name here if it has a Marian name*).

As we pray the Hail Mary let us think about the life of Mary and ask for her support as we too walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

**All:** Hail Mary, Full of Grace.....

**Allow for a moment of reflection** *Shared Prayers*

## ***Shared Prayers***

***Leader:***

As we pause now before our prayer time ends,  
we stop to light our staff/school candle.

***(Light the staff/school candle)***

We pause in silence to pray for the intentions we have added to our prayer intentions book....

***(place it into the prayer space)***

and those who are already on its pages.

We add to these the prayers that are known only in our hearts...

As our candle burns throughout today, may the One who hears the cries of the poor, listen to our prayers and may our hearts be opened to hear the response.

***(Allow for silent prayer)***

## ***We Go forth***

### ***Closing Prayer***

***Leader:***

As we go about our day O God,  
As we strive to walk with Jesus as people of service.  
Remind us that we are the face of Christ,  
Who is with us always.

May your grace, mercy and peace,  
Bless us, keep us and transform us all,  
This day, now and forever.

**All:** Amen