

Epilogue

As we come at last to bring together in a kind of final word what Venerable Catherine McAuley was and still is for us, we well might say that she reduced everything that touched her life to a single-hearted simplicity that bound together prayer and ministry in a beautiful synthesis that saw God in all things and all things in God. This immanence of God's presence was the source of her strong faith, her confident hope, and the ardor of her love. It produced in her a joy which was the gift of the Holy Spirit that spilled over into all her relationships, her friendships, and the simple pleasures of her life, giving her the capacity to bring to her ministry "the tidings of great joy."

The spirituality which she has handed on to us, although nurtured within the context of the Irish Church of the nineteenth century, was rooted in Scripture and Tradition of the Universal Church. As such it is open-ended. Its vitality has not diminished over more than one hundred years. Its spirit still lives and unites us Sisters of Mercy whether from South America or New England, from South Africa or Thailand, from Central America or Australia, from New Zealand or Newfoundland.

It challenges us today more than ever in our contemporary world. Catherine leaves it to us to point out new ways in which to respond to the voices of the ignorant, of the abused, of the addicted, of all the victims of a sick society. Although her message may be expressed in a new idiom, in a variety of languages and dialects, it remains unchangeable in a changing world. But we are not alone. Catherine has left us the example of her own saintly life and the beautiful symbols of the ring and Mercy Cross as signs of a dedication both selfless and joyful.

Although we hope most dearly for her canonization, perhaps we should realize that with our own gifts and through our own personalities we continue her presence within our communities, our ministries, and our broken world. This is all she asks.