

Catherine McAuley Statue Dedication 11/6/19

Sister Jean Messaros, RSM, welcome:

As I reflected on today's program, I wanted us to see this beautiful statue come alive...to see Catherine as she lived. I wanted us to know Catherine's heart and passion so that when we sit by this likeness of her we would feel that presence.

I want to share some quotes from the Sisters who "Knew" her. I quote from the book "A Woman Sings of Mercy" by Sr. Mary Carmel Bourke, RSM.

Sister Vincent Whitty who had such an intimate relationship with Catherine during the last weeks of Catherine's life wrote years later.

If you had known her, how you would have loved and venerated her, and still be as familiar with her as with an intimate friend. I have often wished that her lovely character could be photographed for the admiration and instruction of posterity; it seems to me that words are slow and imperfect in conveying all the lineaments of that gifted soul.

She was so humble, yet dignified, so playful and witty, yet reserved and charitable, so pious and strict, yet amiable and kind. But to me at least, the climax of her attractions was that she was always the same, always ready to listen.

One of Catherine's great gifts was the power she had to impart peace of heart to her Sisters and lead them, even in sorrow, to a deeper trust in God by the strength of her own trust in him. When a very young Sister died in Limerick, she gave hope to the grieving Sisters by writing, in a very gentle, loving letter of sympathy:

Some great thing which He designs to accomplish would have been too much without a little bitter in the cup.

In lesser trials, in the rough journeys by road and canal and sea, and in the poverty of the early foundations, the same cheerful optimism shone out. She looked back on them later with affection: Those happy, hard times!

She wrote to Dublin in genuine amusement of the hardships of the first foundation in Tullamore: Rooms so small, two cats could scarcely dance there!

Catherine possessed great resilience of spirit and her letters are full of delightful flashes of humor and witty anecdotes. Even when bone-weary from exhausting travel and failing health she could raise the spirits of the Sisters with a few cheerful words, and at the same time hide her suffering from them: Nothing like foundations for rousing us all!

Kristin Kuntzman, a current student who is out on clinical experience, shared her thoughts when she learned of the Catherine statue:

Because a woman paved the way in pursuit of the heart of Christ, so many opportunities have come my way.

Education, service, mentorship, conferences,
understanding the importance of justice, a new
respect for Catholicism, a community that pushes
me to be better, the roof that is currently over my
head...a list that can go on forever.

So thankful for Misericordia. So thankful for
Catherine.