

BON SECOURS MERCY HEALTH
Humility of Mary Day Prayer Service
July 17, 2023

Leader:

Bon Secours Mercy Health stands on a rich tradition of Catholic health ministry in the United States, inspired by religious congregations of women and men who extended the compassionate ministry of Jesus long before us. Recognizing their legacies and building on their good work is an important part of who we are and who we are called to be today.

Humility of Mary Day marks the anniversary when, in 1854, the Sisters of the Humility of Mary were founded through the partnership of Marie-Antoinette Potier and Father John Joseph Begel. We gather as a ministry on this special day to give thanks for this inspiring community of women, asking for God's help in keeping us faithful to the ministry they have entrusted to us.

Reader 1:

A reading from the Book of Sirach. (Sirach 3:17-18)

My child, conduct your affairs with humility,
and you will be loved more than a giver of gifts.
Humble yourself the more, the greater you are,
and you will find favor with God.

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Reader 2:

In a small French village in 1854, Marie-Antoinette Potier opened her heart and her home to serve the needs of women and children struggling under the burden of poverty. Assisted by Fr. John Joseph Begel, the ministry grew as other women joined Mother Madelaine (as she became known), caring for the sick and providing education and housing to young girls and orphans. When called to extend their mission to America in 1864, the entire community responded and eventually took up residence in western Pennsylvania. Here, under the leadership of Mother Anna Tabourat (who succeeded Mother Madelaine and is recognized as the American Foundress), the community took care of injured railroad workers and others who were sick, provided schooling and refuge for those who were poor, while at the same time restoring the dilapidated farm they inherited. Despite many hardships, they stewarded their resources wisely and established a foundation from which to sustain their ministry long into the future.

As we celebrate this inspiring community of women, let us pause for a moment of quiet reflection. Consider:

The Sisters have overcome many obstacles in their life and ministry. What empowers you to overcome the obstacles that you face in your own life, and in the ministry that we share as Bon Secours Mercy Health?

Pause

Reader 3:

From their earliest days until now, the Sisters have continued to share Jesus' mission of bringing abundant life to all God's people, especially the poor, by responding to the needs of our times. In addition to their ongoing work in education, housing, and social services in the U.S. as well as in Haiti, they are especially active in caring for creation. The original farm at Villa Maria now boasts over 700 acres, some of which is devoted to sustainable gardening of organic produce, with a large portion being donated to food banks, shelters, and parishes. The Sisters have also been trailblazers in defending the rights of workers and immigrants, leading the fight against human trafficking in all its forms. And of course their legacy in healthcare, which began over a century ago, continues through the ministry they share with us, as Bon Secours Mercy Health.

Reader 4:

Throughout their history and in their actions today, the Sisters of the Humility of Mary have done so much good with the gifts and the favor that God has given them. As Bon Secours Mercy Health, our value of stewardship calls us in a similar way, to promote the responsible use of all our resources, including Earth itself, so that the ministry we now share together might be sustained long into the future. Let us be willing to trust that, as we conduct our affairs with humility, God's favor will continue to empower us to respond to the needs of our times and to bring more of God's life-giving presence into the world. And so, let us consider:

How can I embody humility today, so that God's abundant life might be shared with all those I encounter, especially those who are poor and vulnerable?

Pause

Leader:

Let us pray.

God of life abundant,

Our hearts are full of gratitude and joy today, as we recognize the Sisters of the Humility of Mary and the gift of their ministry, to respond to the needs of the times with vision, courage, and generosity. As Bon Secours Mercy Health, we ask for a share in their spirit, that we might honor their name by embracing humility. Like Mary your mother, may we be humble enough always to say "yes" to your call in our lives, and each do our part in bringing your life-giving presence more and more into the world, especially for those who are poor, dying, and underserved. Amen.

Thank you for joining us. Have a wonderful Humility of Mary Day!