

BON SECOURS MERCY HEALTH
Bon Secours Day Prayer Service
January 24, 2024



Leader:

Bon Secours Day marks the anniversary when, in 1824, the original twelve Sisters of Bon Secours first professed their vows. We gather as a ministry on this special day to give thanks for this inspiring community of women, and to ask for God's help in keeping us faithful to the ministry they have entrusted to us.

Reader 1:

Today's celebration is especially significant for being the 200th anniversary of that momentous day in Paris, when those brave young women entrusted themselves fully into God's service, establishing a foundation from which to continue bringing good help to neighbors in need. And the needs at that time were great. The French Revolution left the people of Paris reeling from violence and social upheaval. They were times of volatility and uncertainty, with unprecedented changes that threatened a whole culture's sense of stability and hope for the future.

Reader 2:

Today's anniversary is a testament to the perseverance of that early community's spirit and to the abiding hope that comes from God's call. Literally these women entered into the suffering they witnessed, entering the homes of those they were nursing and staying at their bedsides. Their readiness to go anywhere and care for the needs of the vulnerable gained them a reputation for being *bon secours*, good help, to a city in need of healing, compassion, and liberation.

Leader:

As we celebrate this historic occasion, we recognize our own call to continue bringing good help to our communities today. Take a moment and reflect on that call in your life and ask: in our own uncertain times, how do I remain committed to pursuing my call?

Pause.

Reader 1: A reading from the Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 5:13-16)

You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.

The Gospel of the Lord

All: Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ

Leader:

Salt may be one of the most ordinary yet one of the most remarkable condiments. It seasons best when it draws out and enhances the flavors of other foods. Similarly, light does not focus attention on itself so much as it dispels the surrounding darkness, illuminating the rest of the space where it shines. Ask yourself: how am I being salt and light to those I serve?

Pause. Leader should welcome responses and facilitate any further discussion, as time allows.

Reader 2:

For two hundred years and counting, the Sisters of Bon Secours have been salt and light to neighbors in need, preserving their own uniqueness through a ministry anchored in a commitment to genuine service. They have remained who they are by giving themselves away, devoting themselves to enhancing the lives of those around them.

Pause.

Let us conclude in prayer, sharing together the words of a hymn first composed to celebrate another anniversary in the Sisters' life. We will recite verse one only, but the full hymn is on the back of your prayer card.

O God, You Call Us Through the Years

Text: Mary Louise Bringle, 2003; © 2006, GIA Publications, Inc.

1. O God, you call us through the years to courage and to care,
to bind the wounds of suffering lives in service and in prayer;
to spread compassion through the earth like waters through the seas.
Your will for wholeness guides our path: good help to those in need!

All: Amen.

Leader: Now go in peace, to spread good help to those in need.



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Your will for wholeness guides our path: good help to those in need!
2. As Christ our Savior healed the sick and blessed the ones who mourn,
we share his yoke for neighbors' sake, both joys and sorrows borne.
A fragrant balm of hope and grace shall perfume ev'ry deed
with comfort in our risen Lord: good help to those in need!
3. In Christ the poor are lifted up and captives find release.
All tears are wiped from crying eyes upon the Mount of Peace.
'Til justice rolls in mighty streams and ev'ry heart is freed,
our charge is liberating love: good help to those in need.

