

PRAYER IN HONOR OF MOTHER ELIZABETH BOYLE'S ANNIVERSARY, June 21



Call to Prayer

Leader: After a lifetime of courageous charity, serving in Emmitsburg, Philadelphia and New York, Mother Elizabeth Boyle, first Mother of the Sisters of Charity of New York, died June 21, 1861, during the first months of the Civil War.

Word of God

Reader 1: 2 Corinthians 5:14, 17

The love of Christ impels us, once we have come to the conviction that one died for all, therefore, all have died....Whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come. The Word of God.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

Litany of Relationship

Leader: Mother Elizabeth, we honor you as a woman impelled by Christ's boundless love and devoted to **relationship**.

Reader 2: A few months before Mother Seton died, she wrote to Sr. Elizabeth: "*Dearest old partner of my cares and bearer of my burdens....One thing I beg you: when you write to me, scribble without care - say much and never mind how it is written.*"

ALL: May we be a caring and healing presence for one another in times of sorrow and joy.

Reader: When the lay managers of the Philadelphia orphan asylum questioned Mother Elizabeth's request for more support, she replied firmly: "*I understand it is thought there are too many sisters here for the service of such a small number of children. If you can get a smaller number of persons who will use more economy and be less expense to you than we are, to do what we do, you surely know you are at full liberty, we can quickly withdraw.*"

ALL: May we respectfully and honestly engage with the communities of which we are a part.

Reader: Sr. Elizabeth wrote to another Sister: "*I would die for the New York Sisters, for a more faithful, devoted band I never saw.*"

ALL: May we seek to live community vibrantly, generously, and with one heart.

Reader: Sr. Elizabeth's last words were said to be: "*Love one another; love the children entrusted to your care. Everything depends on your love.*"

ALL: May our lives witness to God's boundless love in our care for others and for all creation.

Quiet Music - Time for reflection/sharing:

As my relationships grow and change, what does it mean to be loving? faithful? faith-filled?

How does Elizabeth Boyle call me to treat others with support and kindness at work and at home?

Word of God

Reader 1: Mark 4:35 ff.

As evening drew on, Jesus said to his disciples: "Let us cross to the other side."...A violent squall came up and waves were breaking over the boat, so that it was already filling up. Jesus was in the stern, asleep on a cushion. They woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" He woke up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Quiet! Be still!" The wind ceased and there was great calm. Then he asked them, "Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?"
The Word of God. **ALL: Thanks be to God.**

Litany of Readiness

Leader: In a book of her reflections, Mother Elizabeth Boyle wrote: "*My heart is ready indeed to do in any way Your ever, ever blessed will; and Thy grace surely is also ready, ready for every moment and circumstance.*" Mother Elizabeth, we honor you as a woman of **unrestricted readiness.**

Elizabeth, you were ready to meet your grace. **ALL: May we follow in your footsteps.**

Elizabeth, you were ready to respond to the challenges of your times.
ALL: May we follow in your footsteps.

Elizabeth, many times in your life, you were ready to let go and move on, to leave what was familiar and begin anew.
ALL: May we follow in your footsteps.

Elizabeth, you were ready to risk all to embrace a new call to Charity.
ALL: May we follow in your footsteps.

Quiet time for reflection/sharing:

For what am I willing to leave home, to cross to the other side?

How is the Spirit calling me to live open and ready to meet my grace?

CLOSING PRAYER:

God of Compassion, we thank you for the gift of Mother Elizabeth Boyle who, as a Sister of Charity, cared for thousands of immigrant children in New York City. Just as she comforted the frightened and welcomed those who were abandoned, so may we follow in her footsteps.

Help us to continue to serve and advocate for today's immigrants and for those living in any kind of poverty. In this time of Charity Rising, may we grow in relationship and in readiness. We ask this with confidence in your provident care, through the intercession of Mother Elizabeth Boyle.
Amen.

(adapted from SCNY Prayer for Immigration Reform)