

## The Divine Whisper

### Discernment in the life of Catherine McAuley

#### 4 Letting go

The Baggot Street building programme involved much decision-making. Catherine McAuley had long cherished the dream of creating a refuge for female servants who were unemployed or at risk. Now, with Mr Callaghan's generous legacy, she could add schoolrooms for poor girls, and accommodate a resident community of dedicated helpers. As the vision grew, it provoked opposition. Catherine began to wonder if it really was God's will after all. She decided to consult the Archbishop.



*“She felt that, if he sanctioned her undertaking, it mattered little what others said or did; if he objected, it was to be a sign that her undertakings had not been directed by the Spirit of God.*

*“Accordingly, she sought an interview with him. She said that fame or distinction she sought not. She wished not to interfere with any others that may be labouring in the same field, and offered to resign into his hands the house she had nearly completed ...”* (from the recollections of Sr Vincent Harnett)

Notice Catherine's humility and her self-honesty:

- seeking out a trusted wisdom figure to consult
- examining her own motives
- considering how her decision might impact other people
- reaching a place of freedom within herself... to let go if necessary

Baggot Street was dear to her heart, but Catherine was neither possessive nor controlling. She was resigned to whatever God's will might turn out to be. Mr Callaghan's legacy had been given for God's work. She considered herself a steward, not an heiress.

As it turned out, the Archbishop gave wholehearted approval to her scheme. This was the confirmation she sought. However, he also cautioned her, *“Every good work, he said, was destined to be opposed... and for trials she should be prepared.”*

**What can you take from this story for yourself?**

**You may wish to finish by praying the *Suscipe* of Catherine McAuley. This prayer was her Act of Resignation to God's will.**