

# Ritual

## Marcellin in the Snow

### Preparation:

- Create a space with symbols such as a lantern with a candle, a rope, an image of Mary.
- Set up projector of use of video
- Cut out pieces of paper and provide pens

### Introduction

*The blizzard of the world  
has crossed the threshold  
and it has overturned  
the order of the soul.  
—Leonard Cohen*



In February 1823, Marcellin learned that a Brother in a town 20kms away, had come down with a serious illness. Concerned about his condition, the young priest set out on the long journey on foot across rough countryside to visit him with Brother Stanislaus at his side.

On their return trip, the two men were caught in the full fury of a snowstorm. They were young and energetic men, but hours of wandering, lost on the slopes of Mount Pilat eventually led to exhaustion. Night set in; the possibility of frost-bite and death in the snow increased with each passing hour. Both men turned to Mary for help and prayed the *Memorare*.

Within a short while, they saw a lit lantern, not too far away in the distance. A local farmer had left his house to enter a nearby stable. Marcellin and Stanislaus followed the light and found refuge from the storm in the farmer's house. For the rest of his days, Marcellin saw their rescue as an act of providence and the protection of Mary.

### Pause to consider...

**Leader:** What has got me through when I have faced a stormy time in my life?

**Speaker 1:** There was a time when farmers on the Great Plains, at the first sign of a snow storm, would run a rope from the back door out to the barn. They all knew stories of people who had wandered off and been frozen to death, having lost sight of home in a whiteout while still in their own backyards.

**Speaker 2:** Today we live in a blizzard of another sort. It swirls around us as we witness refugees risking their lives to cross the ocean in flimsy boats, seeking safety. We experience it in injustice, destruction of our environment and war. We all know stories of people who have wandered off into the storm and been separated from their own souls, losing their bearings in life.

**Speaker 3:** Like Mary who set out across the dangerous terrain of the hill country of Judea to visit her cousin Elizabeth who was in need, Marcellin and Br Stanislaus set out across the rough countryside to visit a brother who was seriously ill. May we, inspired by their example, have the courage to respond to those in need even if it means great personal sacrifice.

**Speaker 4:** Like Peter who felt the wind in his face and started sinking in the water cried to Jesus for help, Marcellin and his companion cried out to Mary in their time of need. May we follow in their footsteps and recognise that we have Jesus and Mary to reach out to in our time of need, confident that they will stretch out their hand and come to our aid.

**Speaker 5:** The local farmer unbeknown to him was a welcome help and guidance to Marcellin and his companion. Let us recognise the times that we could be of help to others unbeknown to us. Let us take a moment to acknowledge and thank those who have helped us without realising it.

**Leader:** For the next few moments, compose your own version of the *Memorare*. Watch the original prayer here for inspiration:

**The Memorare:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ehPSTme3i1U>

*Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided.*

*Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto you, O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to you do I come, before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful.*

*O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in your mercy hear and answer me.  
Amen*

- Distribute pieces of paper and invite the students to write their own version of the *The Memorare*.
- Invite 2 or 3 students to read their Memorare Prayers.

## Final Blessing

### Blessing (John O Donohue)

On the day when the weight deadens  
on your shoulders and you stumble,  
may the clay dance to balance you.

And when your eyes freeze behind  
the grey window and the ghost of loss  
gets in to you, may a flock of colours,  
indigo, red, green, and azure blue  
come to awaken in you a meadow of delight.

When the canvas frays in the currach of thought  
and a stain of ocean blackens beneath you,  
may there come across the waters  
a path of yellow moonlight to bring you safely home.

May the nourishment of the earth be yours,  
may the clarity of light be yours,  
may the fluency of the ocean be yours,  
may the protection of the ancestors be yours.  
And so may a slow wind work these words  
of love around you, an invisible cloak  
to mind your life.

**Hymn:** *The Deer's Cry* (Video attached)

