

Blessing of Sister Elizabeth Davis, RSM, as she attends the Synod in Rome



Mercy Day 2023 was more special in St. John's, NL, as many Sisters of Mercy gathered with parishioners in our Basilica Cathedral to witness a special blessing for Sister Elizabeth Davis as she travels to the Bishops' Synod in Rome in October 2023. At the regular 11:00 a.m. Sunday Liturgy, Pastor Father Cecil Critch welcomed all especially the many Sisters of Mercy and their Associates on Mercy Day, the day in 1827 when Catherine McAuley opened the House of Mercy in Dublin, Ireland.

Congregational Leader Sister Diane Smyth spoke to the parishioners reminding all of the meaning of the Synod and the importance of the time of preparation through prayer and discussions that we, the voice of the people of God, have given to this matter. She spoke of the significance of this Synod where for the first time not only Bishops will be attending but lay people and those of other faiths who will be voting members. She repeated Pope Francis' words of the need for "closeness, compassion and tender love" as we journey together. Sister Diane congratulated Sister Elizabeth on being invited to participate in the Synod, one of only ten Canadians (five women and five men) to be invited as part of the 21% voters who are not Bishops. She wished her well and asked God's blessing on her to speak passionately on our behalf.



Father Cecil Critch, PP, invited all parishioners to extend their hands in blessing over Sister Elizabeth as he gave thanks for God's presence among us which challenges and leads us in service of God's people. He prayed that 'God would pour out abundant blessings on Sister Elizabeth as she journeys to the Bishops' Synod in Rome. May she be given your wisdom to listen attentively to the voice of Jesus. Give her courage to be the hands and feet of Jesus in a world hungering for love, mercy and healing. Help her to discern the ways we are called to carry out God's mission in the world. Amen". This blessing was followed by spontaneous applause and the singing of a triple alleluia by the choir.



The choir then sang a special musical tribute for all Sisters of Mercy on Mercy Day with a special blessing for Sister Elizabeth. “May God’s peace and mercy guide you...” Following the Liturgy all were invited for cake and refreshments in the ambulatories.

