

SAMPLE COMMITMENT RITUAL FOR CHRIST CHILD MEMBERS

PRESIDENT: In September 2016, Pope Francis celebrated the Mass of Canonization of Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Over two hundred thousand people gathered with the Holy Father to rejoice in the life of this wonderful Saint who left everything to serve the poorest and most in need. During the homily Pope Francis offered these beautiful words:

“Following Jesus is a serious task, and, at the same time, one filled with joy; it takes a certain daring and courage to recognize the divine Master in the poorest of the poor and to give oneself in their service. In order to do so, volunteers, who out of love of Jesus serve the poor and the needy, do not expect any thanks or recompense.”

The words of Pope Francis remind us of our own founder. Mary Virginia Merrick’s hope for the Christ Child Society remains the same today as it was over 130 years ago: for each and every one of us to reach out and to go out to the little ones in need, to the families who desperately await our love, to the young girls and boys who feel a hopeless beginning to their precious lives. To find the need without being asked and to respond with a heart full of mercy and eager for service.

The call of Pope Francis during the Jubilee Year of Mercy was for all of us to become missionaries to our sisters and brothers on the periphery: to remember and to serve with loving hearts those who have been all but forgotten and left behind, including the children and young people who are so vulnerable.

And this is exactly what our Society has done so well for so many years due to the dedicated volunteers that ask what can be done without ever asking for thanks in return. We remember the little ones in need as we remember the Christ Child himself. So long as we continue to do this, our success in the end is guaranteed, always with God’s help.

Following Jesus is certainly a serious task. But it is one that we joyfully take on and that we now wish to recommit ourselves to as members of the Christ Child Society. So let us personally renew our pledge of commitment and also offer our prayers for the Chapter Presidents and Chapter Representatives across the country whom serve our society in a special way.

PRAYERS OF COMMITMENT:

PRESIDENT: Together we renew our commitment to the Gospel of the Lord: to live our lives in service to our brothers and sisters in need, including the smallest and neediest among us, as we offer our petitions to our Loving God. The response to each petition is, "Lord, increase our love."

1. "Faithful and loving God, increase our motivation to use our own gifts and talents to live the Gospel and inspire the commitment to service of our Chapter members."

We pray to the Lord: "**Lord, increase our love.**"

2. "Help us to become living models of the motto of our Society - To work is to pray - so that by our own example we inspire others in our Chapters to become empowered leaders to serve children in need."

We pray to the Lord: "**Lord, increase our love.**"

3. "Make us always eager to recognize the need you reveal to us and to fill it with the love and compassion that Mary Virginia Merrick witnessed to with her life of sacrifice and service."

We pray to the Lord: **“Lord, increase our love.”**

4. “Strengthen our commitment to serve our Chapters and to give ourselves in service to children in our communities, for love of the Christ Child.”

We pray to the Lord: **“Lord, increase our love.”**

5. “Make each one of us, in all aspects of our lives, missionaries of mercy to those we meet, bringing hope where there is despair, joy where there is sorrow, and love where there is discord.”

We pray to the Lord: **“Lord, increase our love.”**

PRESIDENT: As we extend our hands out to each other let us together pray:

ALL TOGETHER: Gracious and loving God, we ask you to bless us to be your heart, hands and feet here on earth. Guide and strengthen us as we commit ourselves to embrace what it means to be disciples of faith, love and service. Fill us with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit so that our words, decisions, and actions will always be directed to the mission of our society and the glory of your name. And help us, dear Lord, to support each other on our way, to encourage each other when times are difficult, and to rejoice together at the end of the day.

We ask this in the name of your Son, the Christ Child who is our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRESIDENT: And we join together now in prayer for the canonization of our founder, Mary Virginia Merrick:

ALL TOGETHER: Lord our God, in your special love for children, you chose to raise up Mary Virginia Merrick to be the servant of the poor children. In laboring to serve the young and those without hope because of the crushing weight of poverty, she proclaimed the love of your Son. She made her life's work a demonstration that "nothing is ever too much to do for a child."

Grant that her example of selfless charity and courageous virtue in the face of her own suffering will inspire us to be generous in the service of others. We humbly ask that your servant Mary Virginia Merrick be numbered among the Church's canonized saints for edification of your holy people, in accord with your most holy will. Through her intercession, please hear and answer *our* prayer (to aid all Christ Child members across the country in their commitment to service to children in need). Through Jesus Christ our Lord. – Amen.