**Solidarity with Sisters Communal Prayer for Sunday, June 13, 2021 eleventh sunday in ordinary time**

**Trusting all our life to god “We plant the seeds.”**

**CHECK-IN** and then Betty mutes everyone. **(Betty Thompson)**

**WELCOME (Suzie DeQuattro)**

Welcome, everyone!

* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?
* Thanks to Richard McGinnis who prepared this communal prayer.
* Thanks to Reggie Ott and Linda Donaldson for our music.
* Thanks to the people who will be reading and leading us in prayer today: Lynn Bufka, Anne Regan, Bill Fanelli, Maryann Dolan, Sr. Marie McCarthy, Cecilia Estrada, Mary Ott, Sr. Jennie Lechtenberg, Sr. Jo’An DeQuattro, and Norb Bufka.
* If you’d like to read on future Sundays, please get in touch.

**SETTLING IN (Richard McGinnis)**

Let your breath bring you into quiet so you can be attentive to the Spirit and to each other. Notice your breath as it goes in and out…. Let it slow and deepen… and slowly fill you with the peace of Christ. We begin with 3 deep breaths. One to be here… one to be together… and one to know the Spirit who never leaves us.

**(Richard) Reggie Ott will lead us in prayerful song to begin our celebration.**

**OPENING – FOR THE BEAUTY OF THE EARTH (Reggie Ott)**

For the beauty of the earth,
For the glory of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies.

Refrain:
Lord of all, to you we raise,
This our sacrifice of praise.

For the beauty of each hour
Of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale, and tree and flower,
Sun and moon, and stars of light… Refrain

For the joy of human love,
Brother, sister, parent child.
Friends on earth and friends above,
For all gentle thoughts and mild… Refrain

For yourself, O Gift Divine!
To our world so freely giv'n;
For that love, from which will shine,
Peace on earth and joy in heav'n… Refrain

**GREETING (Lynn Bufka)**

Beloved Community, let us rejoice!The Spirit of Christ is alive in us! Alleluia! Alleluia!

**All:** Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Alleluia!

**CALL TO WORSHIP (Lynn)**

We remember how the Spirit of our loving God poured into the disciples and enabled them to share the good news with confidence in ways that **everyone** could understand, across all divisions. Today we hope for the same experience: for trust in the Spirit and for capacity to share the Gospel. We believe that the Spirit will accompany us for our next step.

**GATHERING PRAYER (Lynn)**

As we prepare to absorb the lessons of the Scriptures and the Reflection for today, let us listen to the words of Fr. Ken Untener, who later became bishop of Saginaw, MI.

“It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.

The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent
enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of
saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.

No prayer fully expresses our faith.

No confession brings perfection.

No pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No program accomplishes the Church's mission.

No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.

This enables us to do something.., a step along the way, an
opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders….

We are prophets of a future not our own.”

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME (Richard McGinnis)**

Have you ever felt pummeled by the challenges that life has rained down upon you, your family, your friends or the greater community of God’s children?

As we see from the readings for today, you are not alone.

In the second letter to the Corinthians, Paul explains how the gift of faith gives us the confidence to act during our lifetimes in ways that will be pleasing to Christ when we appear before the judgement seat.

In the Gospel reading, which is from Mark, Jesus uses two parables about the kingdom to infuse that confidence in us. These are the parable of the seed **which grows on its own** and the parable of the mustard seed.

In her reflection on the Gospel, Sr. Mary McGlone explains that Mark was addressing a community that was shaken to its core by the horrible realities of its time. While not counselling the members of the community to be passive, Mark’s emphasis is different. He uses the two parables to remind the community of the extraordinary power of the Spirit--which is above us, below us, around us and within us--to burst forth in ways that are unexpected, unforeseen and life-giving.

The message for today is about faith, about trust, and about the power of the Spirit. Sow your seeds, Mark tells us, and then trust the Spirit, with whom you are co-creator, to take those seeds and generate a bountiful harvest.

*(Slight pause)*

**(Richard) Anne Regan will read from the second letter to the Corinthians.**

**READING 1** **2 COR 5:6-7, 9-10 (Anne Regan)**

Brothers and sisters:
We are always confident,
although we know that while we are at home in the body
we are away from the Lord,
for we walk by faith, not by sight…
[W]e aspire to please him,
whether we are at home or away.
For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ,
so that each may receive recompense,
according to what he did in the body, whether good or evil.

**QUESTIONS 1 (Bill Fanelli)** *(Pause after each question.)*

When has your faith given you the confidence you needed to take a step in the dark?

How have you shared your faith to bolster the flagging spirits of someone who was bowed down by a burden?

What do you imagine will be most pleasing to Christ when you appear before Him?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE** **(Betty:** Share slide w/questions, time 2:00, chime, stop slide.**)**

**(Richard) Maryann Dolan will read from the Gospel of Mark.**

**READING 2** **MARK 4:26-32 (Maryann Dolan)**

Jesus said to the crowds:
“This is how it is with the kingdom of God;
it is as if a man were to scatter seed on the land
and would sleep and rise night and day
and through it all the seed would sprout and grow,
he knows not how.
Of its own accord the land yields fruit,
first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear.
And when the grain is ripe, he wields the sickle at once,
for the harvest has come.”

He said,
“To what shall we compare the kingdom of God,
or what parable can we use for it?
It is like a mustard seed that, when it is sown in the ground,
is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth.
But once it is sown, it springs up and becomes the largest of plants
and puts forth large branches,
so that the birds of the sky can dwell in its shade.”
*(Slight pause)*

**QUESTIONS 2 (Bill Fanelli)** *(Pause after each question.)*

When have you scattered a seed and witnessed exponential growth as if the seed had a life of its own?

When have you been surprised by goodness springing forth unexpectedly from an unlikely source?



The Sower by Vincent Van Gogh

**COMMUNAL SILENCE**  **(Betty:** Share slide, time 2:00, chime, stop slide.**)**

**(Richard) Sr. Marie McCarthy will read a reflection by Sr. Mary M. McGlone.**

**READING 3 REFLECTION BY SR. MARY M. MCGLONE FOR THE ELEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (Sr. Marie McCarthy)**

In tune with the summer season starting in the northern hemisphere, today's liturgy invites us to pause and appreciate the simple, extraordinary processes of creation. Today's selection from the Gospel of Mark includes the only parable that no other Gospel repeats: the seed which grows--on its own.

Mark's community had thought the end of the world was at hand and were deeply shaken by Christ's delay in returning. Added to that, their faith proclaimed that the just would flourish like palm trees; instead, Christians were being martyred in Rome and rejected in Jerusalem. These ugly, incomprehensible realities created a perfect seedbed for serious misgivings. Were the Christians as misguided as their Jewish sisters and brothers claimed? Had they been taken in by a fanatical sect? Mark, the first evangelist, wrote to respond to a community beset by danger and these doubts.

The parable of the seed which grows by itself offers an antidote to pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps scenarios that preach that the harder you work, the more God will love and reward you. In contrast to suggesting that our goal is to succeed or even to please God, this parable focuses on the divine power that perpetually bursts forth, giving life to the seeds of the kingdom of God. The farmer in this parable does nothing more than plant. After that, everything mysteriously emanates from God.

Addressed to a community physically threatened and plagued by the doubts arising from unmet expectations, the parable of the seed…reminds the faithful that they don't cause the tides to roll, the sun to rise, or the seed to sprout. This parable pushes the listeners to remember that God's ways are not theirs; therefore, they are called to trust God beyond the limits of their understanding. Paul told the Corinthians as much when he said, "We walk by faith, not by sight."

Mark published this parable for a disillusioned, frightened community. His point was not to tell them to sit back and do nothing, but to remember how prodigious and life-giving divine power is. Finally, to lighten their spirits in the midst of heartbreaking concerns, Mark tells us that Jesus underlined the point of the parable with the mischievous analogy of the mustard seed.

Pious renditions that wax long about the comparison between tiny seed and the wonderful plant that is home to birds' nests often miss the humor of this story. Mustard bushes were invasive weeds. A farmer would no more sow mustard than parents would uncap 15 tubes of toothpaste for a 2-year-old to play with while her twin unraveled a Costco-sized package of rolls of toilet paper. The inevitably ensuing bathroom disaster is a modern equivalent of the agricultural image Jesus conjured by suggesting that a farmer would plant mustard. He described a scene of utterly prolific chaos.

Mark repeated this parable to help his community stand in the midst of chaos and believe that an incomprehensible mystery was germinating out of sight and very near them. Like them, we are invited simply to trust the divine dynamic at play in our environment, accepting that there are moments when we are powerless to do anything more than plant whatever seed we have, then go on, sleeping and rising, night and day.

As we enter into this summer, hoping that this time will herald the end of COVID-19, the liturgy invites us to imitate the farmer of Jesus' least popular parable and watch for the wonders God is working — hidden in plain sight. We can no more predict what the harvest will be than we can cause its growth. This is how it is with the kingdom of God.

*(Slight pause)*

**QUESTIONS 3 (Bill Fanelli)** *(Pause after each question.)*

When have you encountered the Spirit in a way that you never imagined?

Can you recall an instance when you turned over the steering to God; how did that feel?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE**  **(Betty:** Share slide w/questions, time 2:00, chime, stop slide.**)**

**(Richard). Cecelia Estrada will now lead our sharing.**

**SHARING (Cecilia Estrada)**

We invite you to briefly share what emerged in **your** heart this morning as you listened and as you reflected on these readings. That helps us to glimpse the many ways God is among us. We welcome new voices, and we also know that the wisdom of this community includes both words shared and silent listening,

As you share your feelings, please use "I” or “me". And let's leave a breath of silence between speakers. A bridge of silence allows us to take in what was just said and let it influence what we may want to share.

So, let’s begin in silence as we gather our reflections. *[Long pause.]*

Please unmute yourself to speak, and mute again afterwards.

Who would like to begin our sharing?

(Sharing)

Thank you.

**(Richard) Mary Ott will lead us in prayer.**

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY (Mary Ott)**

We know that God alone is enough for us. At the same time, we have heard Paul say that “if there is anything you need, pray for it.” So now we bring what is in our hearts to God. Our response will be: “Lord, hear our prayer.”

Lord, we ask that you grant us the confidence to navigate the challenges of our time with faith in the presence of the Spirit to be by our side. Let us pray. Lord, hear our prayer.

Lord, we ask for your blessing upon the work of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and their member congregations who act in so many ways to bring relief to the hungry, to the sick, and to the abused and oppressed, to seek justice for racial minorities and for immigrants, and to foster reverence for all of God’s creation. Let us pray. Lord, hear our prayer.

Now let’s remember the feelings and prayers that arose in us as we shared reflections, and also the prayers we carry with us. *[Pause.]*

Now, for what else shall we pray? Please remember to unmute and mute yourself.

(People speak.) Lord, hear our prayer.

Thank you.

O God, we give you all our prayers, spoken and unspoken. We will do all that we can to put our prayers into action – while entrusting the outcome to you. Amen.

**OFFERTORY (Sr. Jennie Lechtenberg)**

In these months after Pentecost, we celebrate the amazing fact that the Spirit of God lives in us now and at every moment. What does it mean to offer yourself to God in gratitude? Is there an old or new call that you will commit to this week? *[Pause.]*

Let us pray. Generous God, Creative Spirit, we commit to sharing our time, talents, and treasures so that we may be a light and a witness to the transforming love of Jesus Christ. Amen.

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION (Sr. Jo’Ann DeQuattro)**

O Great Love, we are humbled and emboldened

to know that you trust us to be your body in this world.

We are part of that body as we let go of all that separates us from you,

and as we embrace one another and your entire creation with merciful love.

We give you thanks for your presence in and among us. [Pause.]

We remember the night before Jesus died.

At dinner with friends, Jesus knew all that would soon be asked of them,

and, loving them to the end, Jesus showed them how to care for each other

as they went out into the world.

First Jesus washed their feet

and said, “… as I have done for you, you should also do.”

Then he looked at what was in front of them, the bread and the cup,

gifts of the earth and work of human hands, and blessed them.

So let us, too, invite God right now into what is front and center in our lives

knowing that God will indeed enter what we offer – and bless it. [Pause.]

Let us invite God into ourselves so that we become God’s living presence in our world. [Pause.]

Holy One, you transform us as you nourish us here.

May we nourish others with your presence.

Amen.

**OUR FATHER (Norb Bufka)**

Now let us join our hearts as if we could join our hands to pray in harmony with Christians throughout the world in the words that Jesus gave us:

***All (muted):*** Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us,

and do not let us fall into temptation, but deliver us from evil

for the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

**FINAL BLESSING (Linda Donaldson)**

As we marvel at the unfolding of spring, when sunlight paints the tips of trees with gold at dawn and the air is filled with the sound of bird song, may we be reminded that our God is a God for chaos, a God for calming of the sea, a God who accompanies each of us-- through the Spirit--and generates a kingdom from the humble seeds we sow. Amen.

**CLOSING SONG: Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness (Linda)**

**Linda:** Refrain

Spirit, spirit of gentleness, blow through the wilderness, calling and free.

Spirit, spirit of restlessness, stir me from placidness, wind, wind on the sea.

**All:** Refrain

Spirit, spirit of gentleness, blow through the wilderness, calling and free.

Spirit, spirit of restlessness, stir me from placidness, wind, wind on the sea.

**Linda:**

You call from tomorrow;

you break ancient schemes;

from bondage of sorrow

the captives dream dreams.

Our women see visions;

our men clear their eyes.

With bold new decisions

Your people arise.

**All:** Refrain

Spirit, spirit of gentleness, blow through the wilderness, calling and free.

Spirit, spirit of restlessness, stir me from placidness, wind, wind on the sea.

**All:** Encore Refrain

Spirit, spirit of gentleness, blow through the wilderness, calling and free.

Spirit, spirit of restlessness, stir me from placidness, wind, wind on the sea.

**RESOURCES**

Gathering Prayer. The prayer, “Prophets of a Future Not Our Own” was first presented by Cardinal Dearden in 1979 and quoted by Pope Francis in 2015. The prayer is an excerpt from a homily written for Cardinal Dearden by then-Fr. Ken Untener on the occasion of the Mass for Deceased Priests, October 25, 1979. Fr. Untener was named bishop of Saginaw, Michigan, in 1980. <https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/prayers/prophets-of-a-future-not-our-own>

Scripture. The source of Reading 1 and Reading 2 is <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/061321.cfm> with the exception that the word “confidence” was inserted in place of “courageous” in Reading 1 based upon the translation found in New International Version Cultural Studies Bible (Zondervan 2016 Ed.)

### Reflection. Sr. Mary M. McGlone, Reflection for June 13, 2021: Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, National Catholic Reporter. <https://www.ncronline.org/sunday-resource/june-13-2021-eleventh-sunday-ordinary-time>

Art.

The Sower by Vincent Van Gogh. <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/8/8b/The_Sower_-_painting_by_Van_Gogh.jpg/751px-The_Sower_-_painting_by_Van_Gogh.jpg>

Music.

“For the Beauty of the Earth.” <https://www.godsongs.net/2012/03/for-beauty-of-earth.html>

“Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness”, #291, Glory to God, The Presbyterian Hymnal, Westminster John Knox Press (First Ed. 2013).