**Solidarity with Sisters Communal Prayer for Sunday, Sept. 26, 2021**

“Would that all the people of God were prophets!*”*

*Numbers 11:29*

**HELLOs** and then Betty mutes everyone. **(Suzie/Betty)**

**WELCOME (Betty / Suzie)**

Welcome, everyone!

* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?
* Thanks to Gail DeGeorge and Lynn Bufka who prepared this communal prayer.
* Thanks to Reggie Ott for our music.
* Thanks to the additional people who will be reading and leading us in prayer today: Mary Ott, Kate Finan, Charlotte Cook, Tim Brown, and Mia Brown.
* If you’d like to read on future Sundays, please get in touch.

**SETTLING IN (Lynn Bufka)**

Let your breath bring you into quiet so you can be attentive to each other and to the Spirit. 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.

Now Reggie Ott will lead us into our celebration.

**OPENING SONG (Reggie Ott)**

We Are One in the Spirit – Peter Scholte

1. We are One in The Spirit, We are One in The Lord.

We are One in The Spirit, We are One in The Lord.

And we pray that all unity may one day be restored.

CHORUS: And they'll know we are Christians by our love, By our Love,

Yes they'll know we are Christians by our love.

2, We will work with each other, We will work side by side.

We will work with each other, We will work side by side.

And we'll guard each one’s dignity

And save each one's pride. CHORUS

1. We will walk with each other, We will walk hand in hand.

We will walk with each other, We will walk hand in hand.

And together we'll spread the News

that God is in our land. CHORUS

**GREETING (Betty / Suzie)**

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

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

**CALL TO WORSHIP (Betty / Suzie)**

We remember how the Spirit of our loving God poured into the disciples and enabled them to share the good news in ways that everyone could understand, across all divisions. Today we hope for the same experience: for joy in the Spirit, and for capacity to share the Gospel. We believe that the Spirit will give us light for our next step. And now let us pray.

**GATHERING PRAYER (Mary Ott)**

Spirit of the Living God,

teach us how to be your community –

to see one another with your eyes of love

and to recognize what is ours to do in the world.

May we inquire, nudge, and challenge each other

to imagine what none of us could conceive alone.

Amen.

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME (Gail DeGeorge)**

We are all called to be witnesses to Christ, indeed, to be prophets. Today’s readings remind us that through the power of the Holy Spirit, we receive – and share – that gift. Being a prophet is not about predicting the future, as it is so often interpreted. Rather, being a prophet is speaking God’s word to people here and now. What is it that I need to be speaking?

We are also reminded that it is through unity that we can -- and must – address common issues. And right now, one of the most imperative, is to Care for Creation as Pope Francis has called us to do. We are in the Season of Creation, which officially started Sept. 1 and ends on the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi on Oct. 4.

As people called to be prophets and people called to Care for Creation, we have work to do. Consider the many things that “being a prophet today” might mean. How do we discern the urgent issues that need God’s prophetic word from us? How can we express God’s prophecy in our example as well as in our words? Do we need to work harder to find common ground? Do we need to examine more fully our prejudices and barriers? Do we need to find courage to speak God’s word? How do we exemplify our care for creation in our lifestyle choices?

We are also called to hear the prophecy of others. Polarization obstructs our hearing, often with a feeling that “Whoever is not with us is against us.” Jesus turns that familiar saying upside down when he says, “Whoever is not against us is with us.” Once again Jesus is helping the disciples to see differently – there is no us and them based on adherence to a particular belief system. Only us doing the work of God. And listening for others seeking to do the same.

*(Slight pause)*

Now **Mary Ott** will read from the book of book Numbers, Chapter 11 followed by questions and silence for reflection. Feel free to stay with whatever question calls you.

**READING 1 Numbers 11**  **(Mary Ott)**

Yahwehcame down in the cloud and spoke to Moses.

Taking some of the spirit that was on Moses,

the God bestowed it on the seventy elders whom Moses had gathered;

and as the spirit came to rest on them, they prophesied.

Now two of the elders Eldad and Medad,

were not in the gathering but had been left in the camp.

They too had been on the list, but had not gone out to the tent;

yet the spirit came to rest on them also,

and they prophesied in the camp.

So, when a young man quickly told Moses,

"Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp, "

Joshua, son of Nun, who from his youth had been Moses’ aide, said,

"Moses, stop them."

But Moses answered him,

"Are you jealous for my sake?

Would that all the people of God were prophets!

Would that Yahweh bestow the Spirit on them all!”

*(Slight pause)*

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS 1 (Tim Brown)**

Imagine a world where **ALL** are prophets. (pause) What would it be like for you? *(Pause)*

How are you changed by the prophesy you hear and the prophesy you speak? *(Pause)*

Think of a time when the Spirit came to rest upon you. *(Pause)* How did you respond at that moment? How has that experience inspired you? *(Pause)*

**COMMUNAL SILENCE:**  **(Betty:** Share slide 1, time 2:00, chime, stop slide.**)**

(Gail DeGeorge): Now **Kate Finan** will read from the 9th chapter of the Gospel of Mark.

**READING 2 Mark 9 (Kate Finan)**

At that time, John said to Jesus,

"Teacher, we saw someone driving out demons in your name,

and we tried to prevent it because he does not follow us."

Jesus replied, "Do not prevent him.

There is no one who performs a mighty deed in my name

who can at the same time speak ill of me.

For whoever is not against us is for us.

Anyone who gives you a cup of water to drink

because you belong to Christ, will surely not go without a reward.”

*(Slight pause)*

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS 2 (Tim Brown)**

What is the difference in your heart between the familiar “Whoever is not with us is against us” and Jesus’ “Whoever is not against us is with us”? *(Pause)*

How have you felt when witnessing someone doing the work of the Gospel who is not a follower of Jesus? Have you felt like John – confused or angry – or have you had a different response? What has that stirred in you? *(Pause)*

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

(Gail DeGeorge) Now **Charlotte Cook** will read excerpts from Jacqui Rémond’s reflection for today from Catholic Women Preach.

**READING 3 (Charlotte Cook)**

Today’s readings continue to warn us that our sinfulness is destroying our communities, the human family, and the supportive and nurturing home of us all -- planet Earth. The readings also challenge us to be active and prophetic in our lives -- to make a real and meaningful contribution to the New Creation in these times of ecological, social, economic, cultural and church crises.

In the reading from the Book of Numbers Moses was clear: “Would that all the people of God were prophets! Would that Yahweh bestow the Spirit on them all!"

Biblical prophets are inspired to speak God’s Word to the world of their time. Given the urgency and seriousness of the planetary crisis and the threats to Creation confronting us, Moses’ response needs to be ours today. May God bestow the Spirit on everyone, raising people up around the planet as prophets of creation. For a long time, the prophetic voices of women in the bible and in the church have been omitted, muffled, and misinterpreted. It is now urgent to listen to the prophetic voices of creation and women in ecosystems all around the globe.

In the gospel passage, John plays the same role Joshua played with Moses. Like Moses, Jesus rejects exclusive ownership to the good works. He urges his disciples to respect those doing these works, “For whoever is not against us is for us.”

This message is important to remember as members of the Catholic community collaborate with and form networks with people who do not share all the Church’s beliefs or moral positions. For example, in recent years, Catholic agencies around the world have come under withering attack from some Catholics for collaborating on work for climate justice with those who do not share the Church’s official position on controversial ethical issues, such as abortion.

In working with creation our position ought to be ‘whoever is not against us is for us.’ Our questions should be: How are we willing to change our lifestyles to stop participating in systems that fragment God’s interconnected creation? How do we a make real commitment to God’s gift of life here on Earth? And our prayer should be, “Would that everyone were a prophet!”

*(Slight pause)*

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS 3: (Tim Brown )**

Who are the modern-day prophets that have inspired you? How do they make you different? *(Pause)*

What changes in your lifestyle seem urgent for Earth, and really hard for you? *(Pause)*

**COMMUNAL SILENCE**  **(Betty:** Share slide 3, time 2:00, chime, stop slide.**)**

(Gail DeGeorge): **Lynn Bufka** will now lead our sharing.

**SHARING (Tim Brown)**

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,

*[If it feels needed or you’d like to include this:* 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.

Now **Lynn Bufka** will lead us in prayer.

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY (Lynn Bufka)**

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:  **Spirit of Love, hear our prayer**.

Help us to respond to God’s call to be prophets. For this we pray, **Spirit of Love, hear our prayer**.

We pray for the prophets among us, especially women religious throughout the world, and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious as they strive to speak God’s word so that it is truly heard. For this we pray, **Spirit of Love, hear our prayer**.

We pray for all the good people protecting and growing our creation. May their works and actions be ever more fertile and inspire others to also embrace creation and reverse our planetary destruction. For this we pray, **Spirit of Love, 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.) **Spirit of Love, 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 (Gail DeGeorge)**

In these months of Ordinary Time that are really not ordinary, 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? How will you commit to doing something new this week to care for our Earth, indeed to care for all of Creation?

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 (Lynn Bufka)**

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.

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.

Make us your bread of abundance.  Make us your wine of joy.

Let even our fragments be plenty to share.

Amen.

**OUR FATHER, OUR MOTHER (Mia Brown)**

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

***All (muted):*** Our Father, Our Mother, 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 (Gail DeGeorge)**

Broken, we have gathered. Nourished, we reach out.

Now let us now go forth in peace:

in communion with each other

and offering communion to a hungry world. Amen.

Gail: Now Reggie Ott will lead us in All You Works of God by Marty Haugen. (Reggie Ott)

**CLOSING SONG “All You Works of God” (Reggie Ott)**

Chorus:

All you works of God, every mountain, star and tree, bless the One who shapes your beauty,

Who has caused you all to be one great song of love and grace, ever ancient, ever new.

Raise your voices, all you works of God!

Verse 1

Sun and moon: Bless your Maker!

Stars of heaven: Chant your praise!

Showers and dew; Raise up your joyful song. Chorus

Verse 4

All the earth: Bless your maker!

Hills and mountains: Chant your praise!

Green things that grow: Raise up your joyful song. Chorus

Verse 6

Flying birds: Bless your Maker!

Beasts and cattle: Chant your praise!

Children at play: Raise up your joyful song. Chorus

**RESOURCES**

From: [**https://www.catholicwomenpreach.org/preaching/09262021**](https://www.catholicwomenpreach.org/preaching/09262021)

**Catholic Women Preach**

Jacqui Rémond

4th Sunday during the Season of Creation 2021– Renewing the Oikos of God

During the [Laudato Sí Special Anniversary Year](https://www.humandevelopment.va/en/news/2020/laudato-si-special-anniversary-year-plan.html" \t "_blank), a program was launched with public commitments from the various institutions that make up the Catholic Community globally.  Leaders from seven sectors of the church have committed to beginning “a 7-year journey to total sustainability in the spirit of Laudato Sí.”  And all are invited to join: families, parishes, diocese, schools, universities, hospitals, aged care facilities, businesses, farms, consecrated men and women, and organizations/agencies of the church. Today’s prayer for all of God’s people to be prophets provides a perfect context for asking ourselves how these institutions in our communities can respond more fully to live this commitment to care for our common home.

**The Laudato Sí Goals launched in Laudato Si’ Week 2020**

* Ecological Spirituality
* Sustainable Lifestyles
* The Cry of the Poor
* Ecological Education
* The Cry of the Earth
* Ecological Economics
* Community Engagement

[OurCommonHome.org](https://ourcommonhome.org/)

[Sowing Hope for the Planet](https://www.sowinghopefortheplanet.org/) – a project in which every Sister whose congregation is a member of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG), and their connections, are provided with an opportunity to make a difference in our care of the planet. This project is a collaborative effort of the [JPIC Commission](https://jpicroma.org/) in the name of [UISG](http://www.internationalunionsuperiorsgeneral.org) and the Global Catholic Climate Movement – now the [Laudato Si Movement](https://laudatosimovement.org/).

[EarthBeat](https://www.ncronline.org/earthbeat) – Stories of Climate Crisis, Faith and Action – a website publication of National Catholic Reporter. Within this website publication are “[Small Earth](https://www.ncronline.org/feature-series/earthbeat/small-earth-stories/stories)” stories in which readers in readers share – in 150 words or less -- specific ways they're responding to climate change in day-to-day life.