**Solidarity with Sisters’ Communal Prayer for Advent 2021**

**December 5, 2021 - Second Sunday**

**Prepare the Way of the Lord!**

**HELLOs** and then Betty mutes everyone.  **(Betty Thompson)**

**WELCOME (Suzie and Betty)**

Welcome, everyone!

* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?
* Thanks to Mary Dolmage and Cecilia Estrada for planning for today and for lighting their Advent wreath with us this week. And thanks to Cecilia for sharing her Advent tradition today.
* Thanks to Stu Sklamm and Peggy Thompson for leading our music.
* Thanks to the people who will be reading and leading us in prayer today:

Sister Jennie Lechtenberg, Jim De Quattro, George Fulk, Kate Finan, Sister Jo’Ann De Quattro, Cheryl Dowden, Jenny Greene, Marilyn Voight, and Kathy Linaberry.

* If you’d like to read on future Sundays, please get in touch.

**SETTLING IN (Cecilia Estrada)**

Let’s move from greeting each other to making our hearts quiet for the

coming of Emmanuel.

Close your eyes and let us place ourselves in the presence of God.

**Betty: Please play https://youtu.be/pX\_EJEGCYgo**

Begin at mark 2:20 Show Slide 1

Now let us welcome the light.

**OPENING AND LIGHTING OF ADVENT WREATH (Stu Sklamm, Peggy Thompson, Cecilia Estrada, and Mary Dolmage)**

Sung Antiphonal Opening:

Stu: Holy God, swords to ploughs shall be!

Peggy: Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

Stu: Holy God, greed to grace shall be!

Peggy: Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

Stu: Holy God, strife to peace shall be!

Peggy: Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

Stu: Holy God, earth made whole shall be!

Peggy: Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

*Cecilia and Mary light the first and second Advent Wreath candle and say*:

**Cecilia:** Please join Mary and me in lighting your first and second Advent candle. We pray – God of light, shine your love into the hidden corners of our lives. Give us light for our next step.

**Peggy:**  (and all, muted): Rejoice! Rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

**GATHERING PRAYER (S. Jennie Lechtenberg)**

We gather because God comes to us, not only in a singular Christmas event, but also in each person, and in each generation’s lifetime. The scriptures tell us a long-treasured story of salvation for a people beloved of God. We are called today to tell this story in a fresh, compelling way with our lives. We ask to make the pathway straight for the coming of God.

And so, we pray: Emmanuel, God with us, we give you this next hour with confidence that you will act in us and through us. We believe that you will give us light for our next step. Blessed be.

Now Mary Dolmage will invite us to ponder.

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME (Mary Dolmage)**

From Catholic Women Preach

### SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT - MARY ELLEN GREEN, OP

This Advent we invite you to take a fresh look at the familiar stories that lead us toward Bethlehem. Week by week the readings ask us to live with great joy as we work toward God’s just and merciful reign. What are we called to do to straighten the path, to smooth the road for the coming of God in our day? This week, repent, forgive. Increase your love and your perception of the needs of our time.

The author of Luke’s gospel must have been a born journalist. The narrative begins by anticipating and answering all the important questions: When? Where? What? Who? How? Why? It’s all there as we are introduced to this singular moment in history, this pivotal event in the story of the human race and their God, this dramatic announcement of an exciting, transforming opportunity for all who are listening. This is the first and official proclamation of the gospel by John the Baptizer.

The reality of the global pandemic lingers with us. We know the suffering, challenges, and upheaval we have all experienced over the last months. How have we changed? How are we there for one another?

Touch into the longing in your mind and heart for an answer to our search for peace and justice, for kindness and compassion. Who is speaking to us and how? Who are the prophets of our world calling out to us from the wilderness of our existence where we wait to hear that word of hope? Will God’s Kingdom ever come? Will God’s will ever be done on earth as it is in heaven?

It’s all about repentance, isn’t it? METANOIA! METANOIA means a change of mind and heart, a complete turning around at the deepest level, the kind of inner transformation that bears visible fruit.

What does this mean for our own conversion process, personally and collectively? To what new place are we being called? What’s on the horizon for our future? What will be our new identity, our new mission as we evolve? Pope Francis calls us in *Laudato Sí* to what he calls “ecological conversion.” How is our spiritual conversion linked to our relationship with our dear Mother Earth?

**I don’t know about you, but Advent always stirs me up spiritually. There’s something about the gladness of the season, the joy in the air, and the elation in the atmosphere that makes me happy and hopeful. I want to believe, and I do believe that Jesus is the reason for the season.**

**How about you?**

Now let us sit in Sacred Silence pondering her questions.

**COMMUNAL SILENCE** **(Betty:** Share slide 2, time 1:30, chime, stop slide.**)**

*[Slight pause]*

Jim De Quattro will read from the Gospel of Luke. Then George Fulk will offer questions for our reflection. You can stay with whatever question calls you.

*(Slight pause)*

**READING 1** Luke 3: 1 – 6 **(Jim De Quattro)**

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the desert. John went throughout the whole region of the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah:

*A voice of one crying out in the desert:*

*“Prepare the way of the Lord,*

*Make straight his paths.*

*Every valley shall be filled*

*And every mountain and hill be made low.*

*The winding roads shall be made straight,*

*And the rough roads made smooth,*

*And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”*

**QUESTIONS** *(Pause after each question.)* **(George Fulk)**

Imagine yourself there in the crowd, waiting in curious attention, scintillating anticipation, and tingling expectancy to hear what this strange man has to say. How do you feel as you listen to this new message?

What is the context of your own story as you listen with awaiting ears? Who are you and where are you as you enter the Advent invitation?

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

**George Fulk:** Now Betty will play “A Voice Cries Out.”

[**https://youtu.be/fBG\_uNYVzRQ**](https://youtu.be/fBG_uNYVzRQ) **“A Voice Cries Out” by Michael Joncas**

**QUESTIONS (George Fulk)**

How do you make a straight path for God in your heart?

Why could it be valuable for you to spend time “in the desert”?

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

**Betty:** Now Kate Finan will lead our sharing.

**SHARING (Kate Finan)**

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. And let’s leave a bridge of silence between speakers.

We begin in silence as we gather our reflections. *[Long pause.]*

Please unmute yourself to speak, and mute again afterwards. Who would like to begin?

(Sharing)

*[Let sharing continue for about 20 minutes or until 11:20.]*

Thank you. We must stop now, but we can continue after the final song, as we often do. Now let us pray, led by Sister Jo’Ann DeQuattro.

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY (Sister Jo’Ann De Quattro)**

Let us pause and gather the prayers that are rising in us. *[Pause.]*

Our response will be: **Emmanuel, come to us**.

Emmanuel, God with us, help us to be strength for the people directly affected by these calamitous times. For this we pray. **Emmanuel, come to us**.

Emmanuel, God with us, open us to notice where your reign is emerging, and to “stand up straight and raise our heads” as allies with young people and people of color.

For this we pray. **Emmanuel, come to us**.

Emmanuel, God with us, while we wait for your fullness, help us every day to let your presence shine through us, in solidarity with the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and Catholic sisters. For this we pray. **Emmanuel, come to us**.

Emmanuel, God with us, increase our capacity to hold “both urgency and patience” as we make the pathway straight for your coming.

For this we pray. **Emmanuel, come to us**.

Emmanuel, God with us, bless the memory of those who died at Pearl Harbor and for their families. May their service be forever remembered with honor and distinction of their service. For this we pray. **Emmanuel come to us**.

Emmanuel God with us, we thank you for the intercession of your Blessed Mother as we celebrate the Feasts of the Immaculate Conception and Our Lady of Guadalupe.

For this we pray. **Emmanuel come to us.**

For what else shall we pray? Please remember to unmute and mute yourself.

(People speak.)  **Emmanuel, come to us**.

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 – wh~~i~~le entrusting the outcome to you. Amen.

**OFFERTORY (Cheryl Dowden)**

**Cheryl Dowden :** Each of us has traditional ways of Advent preparation. Today Cecilia Estrada will share one of hers.

**Cecilia**: (1-2 minutes – the tradition and its value as I prepare for Christmas)

(Cecilia will share screen to present.)

**Cheryl Dowden:** Thank you for sharing that. In our traditions and daily lives, we celebrate the amazing fact that the Holy One is with us and lives in us now and at every moment. We offer ourselves to God in gratitude for having been chosen, just as we are, to become the highway for God’s coming in our world. How will you do that this week? *(Pause.)*

Blessed Be.

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION (Jenny Greene)**

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,

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 wine,

gifts of **Earth** and the 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.]*

Holy One, make us your bread of abundance. Make us your wine of joy.

Let even our fragments be plenty to share.

Blessed Be.

**OUR FATHER, OUR MOTHER (Marilyn Voight)**

Now let us join our hearts with all who seek the coming of God, using the words that Jesus gave us:

**All (muted):** Our Father, Our Mother, who are 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. Blessed Be.

**FINAL BLESSING (Kathy Linaberry)**

Loving God, you never cease to watch over your people, and you are always alert and ready to answer us in our needs.

Help us to practice the art of patient waiting in our lives, so that this Advent may strengthen our hope in the Lord’s promised return.

Bless this waiting world with the gift of your peace.

We ask you this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Blessed be.

**CLOSING SONG: (Betty Thompson)**

**Please play YouTube video:**  Lord Jesus Come – Richard Cootes

<https://youtu.be/3wFE0muUzw8>

**RESOURCES:**

YouTube Video: “Sacred Space” by John Michael Talbot

<https://youtu.be/pX_EJEGCYgo>

**Catholic Women Preach**

Second Sunday of Advent – Mary Ellen Green OP

YouTube Video: ”A Voice Cries Out” by Michael Joncas

 [**https://youtu.be/fBG\_uNYVzRQ**](https://youtu.be/fBG_uNYVzRQ)

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