**Solidarity with Sisters’ Communal Prayer**

**July 17, 2022 –16th Sunday of Ordinary Time**

*“Hospitality: the friendly reception and entertainment*

*of guests, visitors, or strangers.”*

**Hellos:**  Suzie and Betty, then Betty mutes everyone.

**WELCOME (George Urban)**

Welcome, everyone!

* Alicia prepared today’s communal prayer with my valuable input.
* Thanks to the people who will be reading and leading us in music and prayer today:  Reggie Ott, Linda Donaldson, Arlene McGarrity, Kathy and Bill Cavanaugh, Dan and Karen McCarthy, Debra Street, and Debbie Ballard.
* If you’d like to read on future Sundays, please get in touch.

**SETTLING IN (Alicia Urban)**

Settle into in a position where you feel supported and comfortable. Be aware that we are here in community and God is with us. *(pause)* Together let us reflect on Psalm 46:10.

Close your eyes and gently let your breath slow and deepen,… be open and listen: “Be still and know that I am God; ….. Be still and know that I am …. Be still and know; …. Be still; …. BE.” *(long pause)*

Our opening song is “All are welcome” led by Reggie Ott.

**OPENING SONG: “All Are Welcome” by Marty Haugen (Reggie Ott)**

Let us build a house

Where love can dwell  
And all can safely live,  
A place where  
Saints and children tell  
How hearts learn to forgive.

Built of hopes and dreams and visions,  
Rock of faith and vault of grace.  
Here the love of Christ shall end divisions.

All are welcome, all are welcome  
All are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where prophets speak  
And words are strong and true,  
Where all God's children dare to seek  
To dream God's reign anew.

Here the cross shall stand as witness  
And a symbol of God's grace.  
Here as one we claim the faith of Jesus.

All are welcome, all are welcome  
All are welcome in this place

Let us build a house where love is found  
In water, wine and wheat,  
A banquet hall on holy ground  
Where peace and justice meet.

Here the love of God, through Jesus,  
Is revealed in time and space  
As we share in Christ the feast that frees us.

All are welcome, all are welcome  
All are welcome in this place

**GREETING / CALL TO WORSHIP (Arlene McGarrity)**

Welcome to all who are here as we contemplate not only our readings and reflections but also all who hunger in our world, whether for food, lodging, family, safety, or equality. We abide with everyone who struggles as our world is in turmoil with war, hatred, discrimination, climate instability, and violence of all kinds. All these hungers relate to peace and belonging and hospitality.

Amid all this, we are here to celebrate that God is faithful and is in love with us. God is LOVE!

As we gather in prayer and sharing, we too are called to faithfulness, loving each other and those who suffer and are in need. We are called to be open and hospitable to others and our God.

We gather as imperfect people who are called and challenged to follow Jesus.  We seek also to care for our created world and for all who suffer violence, hunger, or any other pain in body or hearts.

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME (Bill Cavanaugh)**

Today, we will be reflecting on the theme of hospitality and the spirituality of listening to Jesus.

The reading from Genesis in a way focuses primarily on hospitality. As Abraham welcomes travelers in the desert, he gives a clear message that one cannot imagine the rewards that will come. In these travelers it is possible to see the face of God. There is a powerful message to all of us today. If we are open to serving others and our environment as well, we too may see the face of God.

In Luke’s gospel the same theme stands out: hospitality that is tied to listening to the Word of God.

*[Slight pause]*

Now George will read from Genesis 18:1-10a and offer questions that will lead us into silence.

**READING 1:**  [**Gn 18:1-10a**](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/Genesis/18?1) **(George)**

Yahweh appeared to Abraham by the terebinth of Mamre,  
as he sat in the entrance of his tent,  
while the day was growing hot.  
Looking up, Abraham saw three men standing nearby.  
When he saw them, he ran from the entrance of the tent to greet them;  
and bowing to the ground, he said:  
"if I may ask you this favor,  
please do not go on past your servant.  
Let some water be brought, that you may bathe your feet,  
and then rest yourselves under the tree.  
Now that you have come this close to your servant,  
let me bring you a little food, that you may refresh yourselves;  
and afterward you may go on your way."  
The men replied, "Very well, do as you have said."  
  
Abraham hastened into the tent and told Sarah,  
"Quick, three measures of fine flour! Knead it and make rolls."  
He ran to the herd, picked out a tender, choice steer,  
and gave it to a servant, who quickly prepared it.  
Then Abraham got some curds and milk,  
as well as the steer that had been prepared,  
and set these before the three guests,  
and waited on them under the tree while they ate.  
  
They asked Abraham, "Where is your wife Sarah?"  
He replied, "There in the tent."  
One of them said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year,  
and Sarah will then have a son. *(long pause)*



**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS 1** *[Pause after each question.]* **(George)**

Traveling in this arid land, what would you say to Abraham as you also enter this scene?

If you were Sarah being told to prepare for a feast and then watching this encounter between the men and Abraham, how would you feel or what would you say to yourself?

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

Betty: Now Alicia will read from Luke’s Gospel.

**READING 2** [**Lk 10:38-42**](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/luke/10?38) **(Alicia)**

Jesus entered a village  
where a woman whose name was Martha welcomed him.  
She had a sister named Mary  
who sat beside the Teacher at his feet listening to him speak.  
Martha, burdened with much serving, came to them and said,  
"Rabbi, do you not care  
that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving?  
Tell her to help me."  
Jesus said to her in reply,  
"Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things.  
There is need of only one thing.  
Mary has chosen the better part  
and it will not be taken from her."

A painting of two people

Description automatically generated with low confidence

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS 2** *[Pause after each question.]* **(George)**

Reflecting on the similarities in both the Genesis reading and Luke, how do you respond?

As Mary, how are you affected by Jesus’ response to Martha? - or –

If you were Martha, how would you feel?

Think ahead to next Thanksgiving. If you are the host welcoming people to your celebration, or an invited guest, how might you feel different from past occasions?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE** *[Betty: Share slide w/questions, time 2:00, chime, stop slide.]+*

Betty: Anne Regan will read from a reflection by Sister Mary McGlone.

**Reading 3:** From a reflection forJuly 17, 2022 by Sister Mary M. McGlone **(Anne Regan)**

Those who designed our lectionary placed this story in dialogue with that of Abraham, Sarah and their visitors. In that story, God seemingly appeared to Abraham in the guise of three men. Abraham, the welcoming host, could hardly have gone further overboard in ordering their meal. The three measures of flour Sarah kneaded added up to about 60 pounds — before adding water. The steer, of course, was heavier — around 1,200 or 1,300 pounds. With those quantities, we might imagine that Abraham dug a swimming pool where they could bathe their feet!

With the legend of Abraham as a background and the good Samaritan as its immediate Gospel predecessor, we hear of Jesus' visit to Martha and Mary.

As Luke tells the story, Martha appears to be the head of the household, the one who welcomed Jesus into their home. Then, as she goes about working, Mary sits in the position of a disciple at Jesus' feet.

Both Martha and Mary were stepping outside a woman's traditional role. In a home where there is no mention of a man — Luke mentions neither brother nor husband — Martha acts as the hostess, an alternative version of the hospitable Abraham. Then, while Martha works like Sarah, Mary takes the Abrahamic role of accompanying and listening to Jesus.

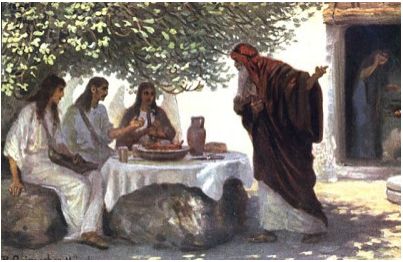
As+ we listen to this story, we should realize that although our translation says that Mary chose the "better," Luke quoted Jesus as saying, "Mary has chosen the good part." After the story of the good Samaritan, it would seem unthinkable to suggest that preaching or studying the word takes absolute priority over direct service.

We should notice that in this story, both Martha and Mary step out of women's traditional roles. Martha's service is described as literally diaconal; she was serving as Jesus served. Mary was sitting at the feet of her rabbi, a physical position and communal role traditionally restricted to men.

Perhaps the deepest conflict reflected here is not the difference between the sisters but the consternation of a community trying to adjust as Christian women assumed previously restricted roles of religious leadership.

In reality, almost any time that Jesus was a guest or shared a meal, conflict came to the table. He consistently stretched accepted limits. Jesus scandalized many of his contemporaries because he ignored rules that restricted anyone's full participation in God's reign. According to Jesus, that reign resembles a banquet as lavish as the spread Abraham offered his guests and remains open to anyone who desires it, no matter their social or religious status.

Today, if we want to enjoy the company of Christ, we need to find the balance between action and contemplation. This will allow us to join in Jesus' rejection of roles, rules and regulations that demean others. Whenever Jesus came to a house, he became the host. Then he made a place at his table for everyone. The only requirement for communion with Christ is acceptance of the others he invites. We choose the good part when we enjoy his open and lavish banquet.



**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS 3** *[Pause after each question.]* **(George)**

Reflect on Sr. Mary’s statement: “…we need to find the balance between action and contemplation.”

After pointing out that Mary was not following the norm regarding women being denied education, Sr. Mary says, “Perhaps the deepest conflict reflected here is not the difference between the sisters but the consternation of a community trying to adjust as Christian women assumed previously restricted roles of religious leadership.” How does this resonate within you?

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

Betty:  Kathy Cavenaugh will lead our sharing.

**SHARING (Kathy Cavenaugh)**

We know the wisdom of our community includes both words shared and silent listening.  Now, if you’d like, we invite you to share the essence of what is emerging within you from our readings and silence.  Let’s begin in silence as we gather our reflections.  *[Long-ish pause]*

Who would like to start our sharing?  Remember to unmute yourself to speak and mute yourself again afterwards.

*[Sharing]*

*[Long silences are common and they can be fruitful.  If there is extended silence after 15 minutes:]*  Is there anyone else who would like to share?  *[Long pause]*

*[Stop by about 11:20.]*

Thank you.  We can continue after the final song, as we often do.

Now Dan and Karen will lead us in prayer.

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY (Dan and Karen McCarthy)**

*Dan*: Let’s pause to notice the prayers that arise in us now.  *[Pause]*  Our response will be: Welcoming God, hear our prayer.

*Karen*: For our people and legislators, that they may be open and hospitable to all who are in need of food, lodging or health care. Let us pray: Welcoming God, hear our prayer.

*Dan*: For those who are suffering loss of family, shelter while suffering the brutality of the Ukrainian war. Let us pray: Welcoming God, hear our prayer.

*Karen:* For Catholic Sisters as they fulfill their ministry of caring for and supporting those in need. And as their numbers decrease, may more women be welcomed into their ministry. Let us pray: Welcoming God, hear our prayer.

*Dan:* For ourselves that we may continue practicing the grace of welcoming our family, community, and wherever need is found. Let us pray: Welcoming God, hear our prayer.

*Karen:* For what else shall we pray?  Please unmute yourself to speak, and mute yourself afterwards.

The response: Welcoming God, hear our prayer.

For Terri Butel, for her successor Amy, and for all the associates, sisters, and partners of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, let us pray. And

For Sister of Charity Maureen Murphy and all the sisters and others who are making their annual retreats during this season, let us pray. And

For the 25 people on death row in Oklahoma scheduled to be executive beginning on August 25, let us pray with George Fulk. Welcoming God, hear our prayer.

*Dan:* You who see us, hear us, and love us more than we can imagine, thank you for receiving our intentions, spoken and unspoken. We entrust all to you.  Amen.

Now Debra Street will guide us into our celebration of communion.

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION (Debra Street)**

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 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, we entrust ourselves to you and to one another.

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

Let even our fragments be plenty to share. Amen.

**THE PRAYER OF JESUS (Debbie Ballard)**

Now let us join our hearts as if we could join our hands in harmony with our family throughout the world:

All (muted):

Heavenly Father, heavenly Mother,

Holy and blessed is your true name.

We pray for your reign of peace to come,

We pray that your good will be done,

Let heaven and earth become one.

Give us this day the bread we need,

Give it to those who have none.

Let forgiveness flow like a river between us,

From each one to each one.

Lead us to holy innocence

Beyond the evil of our days —

Come swiftly Mother, Father, come.

For yours is the power and the glory and the mercy:

Forever your name is All in One.

Amen.

**FINAL BLESSING (Betty)**

Let us raise our hands in a final blessing:

We ask you, Holy One, to bless our gifts and offer them into plenty to share with our sisters and brothers in need.

Bless all of us as we struggle to be engaged in the transformation of our world.

  Bless us as we become eucharist for one another.

Give us and our world, we pray, plenty of knowledge and wisdom,

plenty of justice and compassion, plenty of food and peace. Amen

Now Linda Donaldson will lead us in “Bread to Share by Marty Haugan

**CLOSING – Bread to Share by Marty Haugen (Linda Donaldson)**

Plenty of bread at the feast of life, plenty of bread to share!

Plenty of bread at the feast of life, there is plenty of bread to share!

Bread for those who sorrow - You have plenty to share.

The bread of life and laughter – You have plenty to share.

The bread of strength and justice – You have plenty to share.

You have plenty of bread to share.

Plenty of bread at the feast of life, plenty of bread to share!

Plenty of bread at the feast of life, there is plenty of bread to share!

Fish of hope and kindness – You have plenty to share.

The fish of your compassion – You have plenty to share.

Fish of love and welcome – You have plenty to share,

You have plenty of fish to share.

Plenty of fish at the feast of life, plenty of fish to share.

Plenty of fish at the feast of life, there is plenty of fish to share.

Room for those forgotten – You have plenty to share.

Room for those rejected – You have plenty to share.

And room for all the outcast – you have plenty to share.

You have plenty of room to share.

Plenty of room at the feast of life, plenty of room to share.

Plenty of room at the feast of life, there is plenty of room to share.

**RESOURCES:**

Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P., New Testament Reading Guide: “The Gospel of Saint Luke,” p.93: (The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota), 1964.

Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, “Searching the Scriptures,”Volume 2: A Feminist Commentary.”

USCCB, readings for July 17, 2022.

[**Mary M. McGlone**](https://www.ncronline.org/authors/mary-m-mcglone) “July 17, 2022: Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time,” NCR

[St. Joseph Sr. Mary M. McGlone serves on the congregational leadership team of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet.]

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