**Solidarity with Sisters’ Communal Prayer**

**October 23, 2022 — 30th Sunday of Ordinary Times**

***Proverb 11: “Pride leads to dis-grace, but with humility comes wisdom.”***

**HELLOs,** then Betty mutes everyone.

**WELCOME ( Kathy and Bill Cavanaugh )**

Welcome, everyone!

* Introductions — Is there anyone here for the first time? (Welcome!….please unmute and introduce yourself….Thank you!)
* Bill and I with much appreciated help from Betty and Suzie have prepared this morning’s prayer. We want to thank Betty and Susie for their support, and everyone who will be reading and leading us in music and prayer: Linda Donaldson, Tim Brown, Kathy Linabery, Maryann Dolan, Judy Sholes, Lynn Bufka, Sister Jo’Ann De Quattro, and Norb Bufka.
* If you’d like to read on future Sundays, please put a note in Chat or email later.

Now **Linda Donaldson** will lead us settling in and opening song

**SETTLING IN ( Linda Donaldson )**

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.

**OPENING SONG ( Linda Donaldson )**

 **1 2**

*Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us*

*Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us*

*Melt me Melt us*

*Mold me Mold us*

*Fill me Fill us*

*Use me Use us*

*Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us*

**CALL TO WORSHIP / GATHERING PRAYER ( Bill Cavanaugh )**

God, Creator of all creation, Lover of life and of everything, please help us to love in our very small way what You love infinitely and everywhere. We thank You that we can offer this ‘gathering in’ prayer that will be more than enough, because in reality everything and everyone is connected, and nothing stands alone. To pray for one part is really to pray for the whole, and so we do. Help us each day to stand for love, for healing, for justice and good, for the diverse unity of the Body of Christ and all creation, because we know that this is what You desire: as Jesus prayed that ‘all may be one’. We offer our prayer together with all the holy names of God, we offer our prayer together with Christ our Lord . Amen

Now **Kathy** will introduce us to today’s theme

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME**  **( Kathy Cavanaugh )**

###### This morning we will hear the familiar parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector praying in the Temple. Jesus shows us that prayer always begins with an attitude. It does not matter how much we’ve done, how much we have, or who we are. What does matter is what is in our hearts.

###### Building on that parable, our theme today explores what humility means for us as imperfect humans. Humility lets us relate to both gospel characters because we realize we are on a spiritual journey with both gifts and limitations. Our orientation is not about judging, achieving or arriving. Instead, we commit to a lifetime of humble, ongoing conversion and transformation. Let us strive to hold that commitment as our motivation and our gateway to just and merciful relationships.

Now **Tim Brown** will read from the 18th Chapter of Luke; then he will offer questions that will lead us into a period of silent reflection. Feel free to stay with whatever question calls you.

**READING 1 Luke 18: 9-14**  **( Tim Brown )**

Jesus spoke this parable addressed to those who believed in their own self-righteousness while holding everyone else in contempt: “Two people went up to the Temple to pray; one was a Pharisee, the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed like this: ‘I give you thanks, O God, that I’m not like others — greedy, crooked, adulterous — or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week. I pay tithes on everything I earn.’

The other one, however, kept a distance, not even daring to look up to heaven. In real humility, all the tax collector said was, ‘O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.’

Believe me, the tax collector went home from the Temple right with God, while the Pharisee didn’t. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, while those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

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*[Slight pause]*

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

* Perhaps, at times, we have all been like the Pharisee …..In what circumstances have you been more likely to judgeanother’s prayer or actions?
* How do you respond when you have been judged unjustly by another?
* Imagine and look closely at the face of someone you perceive as greedy, crooked, adulterous, or hurtful…… What wells up in you?

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

**Bill:** Now **Kathy Linabery** will read a Reflection on Humility based on commentaries by Christine Valters Paintner and Sister Mary McGlone.

**READING 2 ( Kathy Linabery )**

Rainer Marie Rilke tells us:

 “If the Angel deigns to come it will be because you have convinced her, not by tears, but by your *humble* resolve to be always beginning; to be a Beginner.”

A ‘beginner’s attitude’ is one of humility. It is the opposite of thinking we have everything figured out like the Pharisee in today’s parable. When we ground ourselves in the truth that we are always growing, that we never fully arrive, and realize we always have more to learn, we are practicing humility. It is about taking an honest look at ourselves so that we become aware of both our gifts and limitations.

Humility is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. It helps us, through self knowledge and conversation with God, to develop clarity. We can begin to see that, despite imperfections, we are all valuable in God’s eyes just as we are. Our hearts soften with empathy and compassion for ourselves and others. We find we can choose to become better ‘listeners’ rather than ‘know it all fixers’, less likely to judge out of our own self rightness. This helps us to participate in co-creating a more just world in a peaceful manner.

Two risks are “abusive humility” and false humility. They both distort human reality. Especially for women and oppressed people, “abusive” blaming and criticism are tools of oppression. “False” humility becomes a form of pride when we obsess over our faults or see ourselves as unredeemable, “unlike the rest of humans.”

Authentic humility keeps us facing God, and facing outward to see the needs of God’s world. We will falter and fail. Like the Tax Collector, in the posture of humility, we seek the blessing of forgiveness, healing, and Divine grace. Let us pick up on his graced mindset. Let us pray: “O God, be merciful to me, Your beloved child.”

*[Slight pause]*

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

* In what aspect of your life have you noticed or accepted that you will always be a ‘Beginner”?—-and what aspects , not so?
* Reflect on someone you know personally who is both gifted and truly humble. What do you notice?

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

**Bill:** Now **Maryann Dolan** will read a reflection based on commentaries by Richard Rohr.

**READING 3 ( Maryann Dolan)**

Did you grow up thinking that goodness is all a merit badge system? - all achievement, accomplishment, performance and perfection. When did you first really listen to Jesus’ good news that God’s choice is always for the excluded ones? Christian “perfection” is, in fact, our ability to include, forgive, and accept our imperfection and the imperfections of others. We grow spiritually much more by doing it wrong than doing it right. This might just be the central lesson of how spiritual growth happens, yet nothing in us wants to believe it.

We can try to be perfect. But at the heart of our efforts must lie the awareness that, by ourselves, we can do, heal, or correct nothing. The point is not to be perfect, but to “perfectly” leave Christ to do, heal and correct. Our role is trust and surrender. The experience of powerlessness, dependence on Grace and the Holy Spirit working in us and through us is where we begin. This attitude in prayer opens us to accept Divine Indwelling and mercy.

There is a line from Leonard Cohen’s Anthem that serves as a reminder when trying to control and make things perfect. The line is…. **“There is a crack in everything, that’s** **how the light gets in”.**

Let’s take a moment to listen to this part of Cohen’s Anthem. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6wRYjtvIYK0>

Start 0:24, fade 2:30, end by 2:40 – be alert to delete ads.

*[Slight pause]*

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

* What spiritual practice helps you me accept your own cracks or others’ imperfections?
* In what ways do you find your imperfections are helping let the Light into you? How do you find yourself resisting?
* When did you recently feel God’s mercy flow into you or a situation?

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

 **Bill:** Now **Judy Sholes** will lead us in sharing our personal reflections.

**SHARING ( Judy Sholes )**

We invite you to briefly share what emerged in **your** heart this morning as you have reflected upon our reading and music. We welcome everyone who wants to speak, and we also know that the wisdom of this community includes both words shared and silent listening.

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

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

[Sharing]

[If there is silence more than about 30 seconds before anyone speaks:] Take whatever quiet you need before you speak.

[If there is extended silence during the sharing:] Is there anyone else who would like to share?  *[Pause for a slow, deep breath.]*

*[Stop by about 11:20.]*

Thank you.  We have to stop now, and we can continue after the final song, as we often do.

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

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

Let’s pause in silence to notice what prayer rises in us now. *[Pause….]*

Our response today will be: “ **Hold Us in Your Mercy ”**

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* For our trust and openness of our hearts to Divine Indwelling and Mystery alive in our ongoing conversion: we pray **Hold us in Your Mercy.**
* For the grace to be humble: we pray  **Hold us in Your Mercy.**
* For the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and all committed brothers and sisters, especially on this Mission Sunday, who have been killed serving others; and for those who continue to serve humbly, steadfastly and unconditionally those in need throughout the world: we pray **Hold us in Your Mercy.**
* For those who are persecuted or excluded for any reason; and for those who demean or consider as inferior anyone who is different: we pray **Hold us in Your Mercy.**
* For our continued commitment to doing our part for living with less plastic, and helping to support caring for and protecting our World: we pray **Hold us in Your Mercy.**
* For our Church leaders to be open to the Holy Spirit’s guidance during the ongoing Synodal process: we pray **Hold us in Your Mercy.**

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

(Shared prayers) Response: **“ Hold Us in Your Mercy. ”**

O You who love us more than we can imagine, we are grateful for this chance to give you our prayers, spoken and unspoken. We entrust the outcome to you. Amen.

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION ( Sr. Jo’Ann De Quattro )**

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 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.]*

Let us know God within 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.

**Norb Bufka** will lead us in the prayer of Jesus.

**THE PRAYER OF JESUS ( Norb Bufka )**

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

**All (muted):**

Our Father, Our Mother, who unite heaven and earth, holy is Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our living 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 ( Kathy Cavanaugh )**

Our final Blessing from Rumi invites us to follow Jesus’ way of being immeasurably merciful to ourselves and each other……

A Never-Ending Blessing to “Come”

“Come, come

Whoever you are

Wonderer

Worshiper

Lover of learning

it doesn’t matter

Ours is not a caravan of despair

Come, even if you’ve broken your vow a thousand times

Come yet again

Come

Come”

Linda Donaldson will now lead us in singing “Change Our Hearts” by Rory Cooney

**CLOSING SONG ( Linda Donaldson )**

Refrain:

Change our hearts this time, Your word says it can be.

Change our minds, this time, Your life could make us free.

We are the people Your call set apart,

Lord, this time, change our hearts.

Verses:

Brought by your hand to the edge of our dreams

One foot in paradise, one in the waste.

Drawn by your promises, still we are lured

by the shadows and the chains we leave behind. But…

Now as we watch you stretch out your hands,

offering abundances, fullness of joy.

Your milk and honey seem distant, unreal,

when we have bread and water in our hands. But….

Show us the way that leads to your side,

over the mountains and sands of the soul.

Be for us manna, water from stone,

light which says we never walk alone. AND…..

**RESOURCES:**

**Opening song:** “Spirit of the Living God” composed by American Presbyterian minister Daniel Iverson in 1926. This hymn is thought to be inspired by scripture from Jeremiah 18:6; “…as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are you in My hand.”

**Gathering Prayer** by Richard Rohr OFM, Community of Center for Action and Contemplation

**Gospel Reading**: Luke 18, 9-14, The Inclusive Bible

**Reflections on Humility**:

1) Christine Valters Paintner, PhD from Abbey of The Arts ; “Monk in the World Leader’s Guide: Conversion”; dancingmonk@abbeyofthearts.com

2) Mary M. McGlone, SJ [ncronline.org](http://ncronline.org) Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time; Cycle C 2019

3) Rainer Maria Rilke, Austrian Poet (1875-1926) “Be patient in all that is unsolved in your heart, and try to love the questions…and perhaps you will gradually live into the answers.”

**Reflection on Spirituality of Imperfection**: Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM; Theme for week of Sept.26th-October 1, 2022 in Center for Action and Contemplation’s Daily Meditations; <https://cac.org/category/dailymeditations/2022/#gsc.tab=0>

**Meditation Song** about imperfections and hope: “Cohen’s Anthem”

Leonard Cohen once explained the meaning of the song as follows:

“Forget your perfect offering”, that is the hang-up, that you’re gonna work this thing out. Because we confuse this idea and we've forgotten the central myth of our culture which is the expulsion from the garden of Eden. This situation does not admit of solution or perfection. This is not the place where you make things perfect, neither in your marriage, nor in your work, nor anything, nor your love of God, nor your love of family or country. The thing is imperfect. And worse, there is a crack in everything that you can put together, physical objects, mental objects, constructions of any kind. But that’s where the light gets in, and that’s where the resurrection is and that’s where the return, that’s where the repentance is. It is with the confrontation, with the brokenness of things.

That is the background of the whole record, I mean if you have to come up with a philosophical ground, that is “Ring the bells that still can ring.” It’s no excuse… the dismal situation.. and the future is no excuse for an abdication of your own personal responsibilities towards yourself and your job and your love. “Ring the bells that still can ring”: they’re few and far between but you can find them.– from Diamonds in the Line

[limina](https://songmeanings.com/profiles/view/17615064/) on March 05, 2014

**Closing Blessing:** Rumi, 13 C Persian Sufi mystic and poet. For 800 years people have found wisdom and solace in his message of courage and spirituality. “Love Is the bridge between you and everything.”

**Closing song:** “Change Our Hearts” by Rory Cooney in collaboration with Theresa Donohoo and Gary Daigle; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xGdAxcLcJU>

**Today’s Chuckle:** Driving by a Church yard sign I read: “God doesn’t want religious Nuts, God wants spiritual Fruits.” Botanically, nuts are the seeds of fruit