**Solidarity with Sisters’ Communal Prayer**

**Sunday, February. 19, 2023**

**Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time**

" *Be holy, for I your God am holy…” Lv. 19:1-2*

**HELLOs** and then Zoom host mutes everyone.

**WELCOME  (Judy Sholes)**

Welcome, everyone!

* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?
* Maryann and I had the pleasure of preparing the prayer for today.
* Thanks to Debra Street for singing today.
* Thanks to Kathy Linabery, Mia Brown, Karen and Dan McCarthy, Peggy Thompson, Richard McGinnis, Kathy Heller, Arlene McGarrity, Reggie Ott, Sister Jacqueline Quinn, and Charlotte Cook for reading and leading us in prayer.
* We are always looking for new readers. The script preparers for the next weeks are: March 5 – Lynn Bufka and March 12 – Kathy Linabery and Midland. If you’d like to read on any of those dates, please let them know. Their email addresses are in Chat. This really helps planners. Thank you!
* Pray with us using this year's Little Black Book for Lent. Thanks to Joan and Stu Sklamm, Anne Regan and Bill Fanelli, you can get a copy wherever you are.
	+ For those nearby: Email Joan Sklamm at jmsklamm@msn.com with the subject “Lenten books,” with your name, address and telephone number and if you are able to pick up your book at SJB Parish Office.
	+ For those who need your copy mailed: Email Anne Regan at aregan@verizon.net with the subject “Lenten books.”

**SETTLING IN (Kathy Linabery)**

Let’s move from greeting each other to making our hearts quiet so we 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.

**(Kathy)**: Now let us listen and join in singing our opening song as we enter our celebration.

**OPENING SONG: City of God** by Dan Schutte **(Debra Street )**

Awake from your slumber! Arise from your sleep!
A new day is dawning for all those who weep.
The people in darkness have seen a great light.
The Lord of our longing has conquered the night.

Let us build the city of God.
May our tears be turned into dancing!
For the Lord, our light and our love,
has turned the night into day!

We are sons of the morning; we are daughters of day.
The One who has loved us has brightened our way.
The Lord of all kindness has called us to be
a light for the people to set their hearts free.

Let us build the city of God.
May our tears be turned into dancing!
For the Lord, our light and our love,
has turned the night into day!

God is light; in God there is no darkness.
Let us walk in your light, your children, one and all.
O comfort my people; make gentle your words.
Proclaim to my city the day of her birth.

Let us build the city of God.
May our tears be turned into dancing!
For the Lord, our light and our love,
has turned the night into day!

O city of gladness, now lift up your voice.
Proclaim the good tidings that all may rejoice!

Let us build the city of God.
May our tears be turned into dancing!
For the Lord, our light and our love,
has turned the night into day!

**GREETING and Gathering Prayer (Mia Brown)**

We gather today as a community of faith, summoned to follow the path Jesus has shown us. While on earth, Jesus modeled for us how to live a life of love and service. May we focus on the many ways we can help build the reign of God …a Kin-dom of love.

 Loving God, open our eyes so we might see your face; open our ears to hear your voice, and open our hearts so that we might love like you. May we inquire, nudge, and challenge each other to recognize what is ours to do in the world. Amen.

 **INTRODUCTION TO THEME  (Maryann Dolan)**

In the past weeks, we have heard Jesus’ invitation to follow him and to live as disciples to build the reign of God here on earth. How do we do this within contemporary social situations? The readings tell us first, we need a solid sense of ourselves as holy; second, we need divine wisdom to live our lives based on a value system that may be judged foolish; and third, we can learn from others who have modeled the commitment to nonviolence, justice, and peace.

We begin with a short piece from Paul’s lengthy letter to the fractious, unruly community at Corinth. He reminds them that they are temples of the Spirit of God, they belong to Christ, Christ belongs to God, and they are holy**.** We look at wise and foolish actions in the daily life of this community, and we are reminded of similar experiences in our communities today.

In Matthew’s gospel, Jesus tells his disciples that they are expected to go beyond what they are obligated to do. If they want to be holy or perfect like God, they must act like God. Jesus’ practical examples of nonviolence can still guide us today.

Retaliation and revenge continue in the culture of our day. In the third reading, we focus on love, justice, and forgiveness through the lens of nonviolence. Love in action is lived out by inspirational leaders, creative movements, and ordinary people who continue to build the reign of God. As disciples of Jesus, we wax and wane in our attraction to Jesus’ teachings for many reasons. We look to others for inspiration, including some in this reading, as we attempt to live love in action in non-violent ways in our fractious, unruly culture.

We are called to build the City of God. To do that our foundations must be hope, love and courage. Love that calls us to see the divine in all; courage that calls us to act non-violently, and hope that one day we shall overcome.

**Maryann**: Now Charlotte Cook will read from[1 Cor 3:16-23](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/1corinthians/3?16)**.** Karen McCarthy will offer questions that will lead us into silent reflection.

**READING 1 (Charlotte Cook)**

Aren’t you aware that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If you destroy God’s temple, God will destroy you…for the temple of God is holy and you are that temple.

Don’t delude yourselves. Any who think themselves wise in a worldly way had better become fools. In that way, you will really be wise, for the wisdom of this world is absurdity with God… As scripture says, “God knows how empty are the thoughts of the wise” and again, “God is not convinced by the arguments of the wise.” So, there is nothing to boast about in anything human, whether it be Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death of the present or the future… All these are yours, and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

 **REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS 1 (Karen McCarthy)**

Reflect on “You are the temple of God.” (pause) How does this affect your sense of self, and how and why you act as you do?

How do you judge unconventional ideas or actions? In what ways do they disrupt or contribute to the wisdom of the community?

In your different communities, what characteristics tell you that someone is genuinely wise in God’s eyes?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE**  (**Dan** will share slide and **Judy** will time and chime)

**(Maryann) Peggy Thompson** will now read the Gospel from Matthew 5:38-48. This reading is considered a continuation of the Beatitudes, and Sister Mary McGlone says that it is dangerously misinterpreted. Unless we understand the relationships that underlie the given examples, we miss the point. This translation says, "Offer no resistance to one who is evil.” We are told that the original was more like, “Do not counter evil in kind.” As an example, handing over both tunic and cloak was to show the world how an unjust system leaves the poor naked while rewarding the rich. Offering more than required by a bully Roman soldier was another disarming act to maintain dignity in the face of injustice. Turning the other cheek was not succumbing to abuse but the only way to avoid the demeaning back-handed slap in that right-handed society. Listen to how this reading provides a clear way to invite oppressors to become more human and to love the enemy.

.**READING 2 (PeggyThompson)**

You have heard the commandment, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’
But I tell you, offer no resistance to an evil person when you are confronted. When someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn and offer the other. If anyone wants to sue you for your shirt, hand over your coat as well. Should anyone press you into service for one mile, go two miles. Give to those who beg from you. And do not turn your back on those who want to borrow from you.

You have heard it said, ‘Love your neighbor…but hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies, and pray for your persecutors. This will prove that you are children of God. For God makes the sun rise on bad and good alike; God’s rain falls on the just and the unjust. If you love those who love you, what merit is there in that? Don’t the tax collectors do as much? And if you greet only your sisters and brothers, what is so praiseworthy about that? Don’t Gentiles do as much? Therefore, be perfect, as God in heaven is perfect.

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS 2 (Karen McCarthy)**

Picture someone you consider an enemy or an evil one. (pause) What feelings rise within you?

How do you hold inside yourself that God’s love is for **both** oppressors and the oppressed?

When have you seen someone maintain dignity in the face of injustice? or turn an unjust demand into a mutually respectful interaction?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE**    ( **Dan** will share slide and **Judy** will time and chime).

**Judy:**: Now **Richard McGinnis** will read **a Reflection on** **Nonviolence.**

**READING 3 (Richard McGinnis)**

 We live in a world where divisiveness is rampant, countries are at war… and those that are not continually prepare for it; prejudice against the racial, cultural or religious “other” often leads to violent action, disagreements end in tragedy; and retaliation and retribution are all too common. In other words, hatred and the need to get even are norms for many.

Humanity has tried to deal with these tendencies for centuries, from when the Jainists, Hindus, and Buddhists tried to preach nonviolence years before Jesus walked this earth until more modern times. In more recent history, numerous individuals and organizations have been strong proponents of nonviolence, de-escalation, and the avoidance of retribution. Mahatma Gandhi, recognized as a leader in the practice of nonviolence, inspired many others to adopt it as a means of dealing with serious issues. In this country, the civil rights movement provided many examples of the use of this method. James Lawson and Martin Luther King, Jr. taught it to those who would become involved in protests for civil rights. King described nonviolence as a weapon that “cuts without wounding and ennobles the man who wields it.” John Lewis, who consistently modeled nonviolence, recognized a spark of the Divine in those who attacked him and made the conscious decision to love, rather than hate, those who attacked him. The courageous nonviolent response of these protestors, often after being brutally attacked, shocked the world and helped bring about the change the protestors were seeking. Other leaders, such as Dorothy Day, Alice Paul, and John Dear, have bravely demonstrated their non-violent approach in their activism. Many organizations, like Pax Christi and Network, also strive for justice and the building of the Beloved Community by modeling and teaching ways to work peacefully toward desired outcomes.

The Church also has been involved in furthering the practice of nonviolence. Pope Francis often has promoted it, calling upon the Church and the world to “make active nonviolence our way of life.” A December 2022 conference in Rome, titled “Pope Francis, Nonviolence and the Fullness of *Pacem in* *Terris,*” offers a ray of hope for spreading more widely the word of this powerful tool. Conference attendees have called upon Pope Francis to write an encyclical on the Gospel of Nonviolence. Their hope is that “just as *Laudato Si* has stirred many to climate change action, so probably would an encyclical on nonviolence move the Church on all levels to embrace it.”

The fact that we are still working for a non-violent society in 2023 shows how difficult it is to change human behavior. In today’s readings, we are reminded once again that we must love our enemies and “offer no resistance to one who is evil.” In Mary McGlone’s words, “Blessed are those who are examples of love and nonviolence.” Do we have the courage, commitment, and willingness to accept the cost of discipleship to be such an example?

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS 3 (Karen McCarthy)**

What keeps you from moving forward in living out Jesus’ loving ways? How do rules and credal statements affect what you do, why you do it and what you believe?

What or who from this list inspires you to practice wisdom in the face of injustice or violence?

What is the cost of discipleship for you?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE** (**Dan** will share slide and **Judy** will time and chime).

(**Judy**) Now ,**Dan McCarthy** will lead us in our sharing.

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**SHARING  (Dan McCarthy)**

We invite you to share briefly 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 breath of silence between speakers which allows us to take in more fully what was just said.

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 ending by twenty minutes after the hour.]*

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

**(Karen )** Now **Kathy Heller** will lead us in prayer.

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY (Kathy Heller)**

Spirit of God, help us to be attentive to your teachings. May we respond to them so they make a difference in who we are and how we act each day. Our response will be **God of hope, love, and courage, hear our prayer.**

For the victims of the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria, that they may receive what they need - sustenance and shelter, medical care and spiritual comfort, we pray….. **God of hope, love, and courage, hear our prayer.**

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For all who have been attacked, abused or put down in any way,that they may they find restorative justice and peace, and know, through us, that God has not abandoned them, we pray .**God of hope, love and courage, hear our prayer**.

For the Leadership Conference of Women Religious leaders, who model how to deal with problems in a contemplative, peaceful, and respectful manner, we pray…**God of hope, love, and courage, hear our prayer.**

For an end to systemic racism and the hateful divisiveness that permeates our society.we pray…**God of hope, love and courage, hear our prayer.**

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

(Shared Prayers) …we pray…**God of hope, love, and courage, 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.

(**Kathy**) We continue to pray with a sung meditation on love to prepare us for our celebration of communion prayer.

**OFFERTORY**…( ) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibCApgirmVw>

**Love Goes On by Bernadette Farrell**

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION**  (**Arlene McGarrity**)

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 (Reggie Ott)**

Now, let us join our hearts in the words of the Polynesian and Maori people and the New Zealand Anglican community:

***All (muted):***

Eternal Spirit,

Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,

Source of all that is and that shall be,

Father and Mother of us all,

Loving God, in whom is heaven:

The hallowing of your name echoes through the universe;

The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world;

Your heavenly will be done by all created beings’

Your commonwealth of peace and freedom

Sustain our hope and come on earth.

With the bread we need for today, feed us.

In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.

In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.

From trial too great to endure, spare us.

From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,

Now and forever. Amen.

(**Reggie**): **Jacqueline Quinn** will lead us in the final blessing:

**FINAL BLESSING (Jacqueline Quinn)**

**A Blessing**

 I bow to the sacred in all creation.

May my spirit fill the world with beauty and wonder. May my mind seek truth with humility and openness.

May my heart forgive without limit. May my love for friend, enemy, and outcast be without measure. May my needs be few and my living simple.

May my actions bear witness to the suffering of others. May my hands never harm a living being. May my steps stay on the journey of justice.

May my tongue speak for those who are poor without fear of the powerful. May my prayers rise with patient discontent until no child is hungry.

May my life’s work be a passion for peace and nonviolence. May my soul rejoice in the present moment.

May my imagination overcome death and despair with new possibility. And may I risk reputation, comfort, and security to bring this hope to the children. In the name of the God of peace, Amen.

Sr. Mary Lou Kownacki, OSB

 (**Judy**) In honor of Black History Month, please join us in viewing and singing “We Shall Overcome.”

**CLOSING SONG: We Shall Overcome**

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7akuOFp-ET8**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7akuOFp-ET8)

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**RESOURCES**

Opening song, “City of God” by Dan Schutte

Theme includes an adaptation from Sr. Mary McGlone’s commentary – NCR Sunday Resources, February 23, 2023.

Pope Francis, Nonviolence and the Fullness of Pacem in Terris 2022 Conference, <https://nonviolencejustpeace.net/>

The Inclusive Bible, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc. for Bible readings

NCR Editorial by Terrence Rynne, January 6-19 2023..