**Solidarity with Sisters’ Communal Prayer**

**May 14, 2023– 6th Sunday of Easter**

**“I will not leave you orphaned.” John 14:16**

**HELLOs** and then Betty mutes everyone. **(Suzie De Quattro and Betty Thompson)**

**WELCOME (Judy Sholes)**

Welcome, everyone! My name is Judy Sholes.

* Introduction – is there anyone who hasn’t been here before?
* Maryann and I prepared our prayer for today.
* Thanks to the people who will be reading and leading us in prayer today: Kathy Linabery, Cecilia Estrada, Mary Dolmage, Lynn Bufka, Jim and Suzie De Quattro, Maria Desjardins, Sr. Jacqueline Quinn, and Betty Thompson. We are always looking for new readers and grateful for your help. If you are available on May 21, contact Richard McGinnis, and for May 28, contact Kathy and Bill Cavanaugh. You can leave a message in Chat or email the planners.

**SETTLING IN (Judy)**

Let the divine name echo in the sanctuary of your heart, the place where the spark of God dwells within each of us. With each inhale invite this sacred presence to be more fully with you. With each exhale seek guidance from this divine indwelling. Let's take three deep breaths: one to be here, one to be together, and one to be open to the movement and gifts of the Spirit.

On the 6th Sunday of Easter, let us enter into our prayer together with our opening song..

**OPENING SONG Sing a New Song by Dan Schutte (Betty)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZH7t9_mXuh4>

[Chorus]  
Sing a new song unto the Lord;  
Let your song be sung from mountains high!  
Sing a new song unto the Lord  
Singing alleluia!  
  
[Verse 1]  
Yahweh's people dance for joy,  
O come before the Lord  
And play for him on glad tambourines  
And let your trumpet sound!

[Chorus]  
Sing a new song unto the Lord;  
Let your song be sung from mountains high!  
Sing a new song unto the Lord  
Singing alleluia!  
  
[Verse 2]  
Rise, O children, from your sleep;  
Your Savior now has come!  
He has turned your sorrow to joy  
And filled your soul with song.  
  
[Chorus]  
Sing a new song unto the Lord;  
Let your song be sung from mountains high!  
Sing a new song unto the Lord  
Singing alleluia!  
  
[Verse 3]  
Glad my soul for I have seen  
The glory of the Lord.  
The trumpet sounds; the dead shall be raised  
I know my Savior lives.  
  
[Chorus]  
Sing a new song unto the Lord;  
Let your song be sung from mountains high!  
Sing a new song unto the Lord  
Singing alleluia!

**GATHERING PRAYER (Kathy Linabery)**

(Kathy) Let all the earth cry out to God with joy

**. All:** Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia! Alleluia!

How awesome are the deeds and enduring is the love of our God. Over and over in the Easter season we are assured that the Spirit of God is among us. Let us live in the Spirit of Christ for one another and our world. May we as a community inquire, nudge and challenge each other on this journey of faith.

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME (Maryann)**

Today we are asked to reflect on the movement of the Spirit in us and how we are called to listen, love and act.

Let’s start in 1st century Samaria where we learn that the early Christians were growing in numbers, as they accepted Jesus as the Messiah and were baptized in His name. Today we read that Peter and John were sent there to lay hands on the baptized Samaritans so they would receive the Holy Spirit. The Spirit was considered necessary so they could carry on now that Jesus was no longer present among them.

In John’s gospel, written 100 years later, we hear Jesus promise an Advocate, Paraclete, Helper (depending on the translation used). According to John, for baptized Christians to be authentic “other Christs”, it was necessary to give themselves over to the indwelling of the Spirit of Truth. In the words of Mary McGlone, “It was an invitation into the love life of the Trinity, the divine community that created the universe simply to share love with creation.“

The 3rd reading is a blending of an article entitled, “The Church and Contemporary Challenges” and a poem by Sister Joyce Rupp. In this 21st Century, we are asked to face great changes including cultural diversity, climate instability, loss, and uncertainty. As we reflect on the power of the Spirit, let’s ask ourselves: In our time how do we receive the Spirit? In our lives how do we pay attention to her stirrings?

Cecilia Estrada will read from Acts 8:5-8, 14-17.

Then. Jim De Quattro will offer questions that will lead us into silence.

**READING 1** Acts 8:5-8, 14-17 **(Cecilia Estrada)**

Those who had been scattered began to proclaim the Good News wherever they went. Philip went down to the town of Samaria and there proclaimed the Messiah to them. Without exception, the crowds paid close attention to Philip, listening to his message and taking note of the miracles he performed. Many people were freed from unclean spirits, which came out of them shrieking loudly. Many people who couldn’t move or couldn’t walk were healed. The rejoicing in the town rose to a fever pitch.

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. The two went down to these people and prayed that they would receive the Holy Spirit. She had not yet come down upon any of them, since they had only been baptized in the name of Jesus. Upon arriving, the pair laid hands on the Samaritans, and they received the Holy Spirit.

**QUESTIONS 1 (Jim De Quattro )**

Recall a time when you experienced a laying on of hands… or, when you have been part of a crowd where “rejoicing [in the Spirit] rose to a fever pitch”? How did you feel being there?

How do you understand your Baptism now? What is most powerful for you in the ritual?

As a baptized Catholic Christian, what sense of mission do you have now? How is this lived out in your daily life?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE** **(Betty:** Share slide; Judy time 2:00 & chime.**)**

**Judy:** Now, Mary Dolmage will read from the gospel of John, chapter 14:15-21.

**READING 2 (Mary Dolmage)**

“If you love me and obey the command I give you, I will ask the One who sent me to give you another Paraclete, another Helper to be with you always…the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept since the world neither sees her nor recognizes her; but you can recognize the Spirit because she remains with you and will be within you.

I won’t leave you orphaned; I will come back to you. A little while now and the world will see me no more; but you will see me; because I live, and you will live as well. On that day you will know that I am in God, and you are in me, and I am in you.

Those who obey the commandments are the ones who love me, and those who love me will be loved by Abba God. I, too, will love them and will reveal myself to them. “

**QUESTIONS 2 (Jim De Quattro)**

Recall a time when you felt “orphaned” yet felt deeply that you were in God and God was in you.

When did you become aware of the indwelling of the Spirit?  How do you recognize "stirrings of the Spirit “…in yourself or others?

Quietly sit with an important choice in your life right now. Listen for what the Spirit wants you to know.

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

**Judy**: Now Lynn Bufka will read a reflection based on segments of an article entitled “The Church and Contemporary Challenges” and a poem by Joyce Rupp.

**READING 3 A Reading Based an article entitled, “The Church and Contemporary Challenges” and a poem by Sr. Joyce Rupp (Lynn Bufka)**

Today, even in the 21st century, we are facing cultural change, loss, and uncertainty about the future of the Church and our world. Some of these new challenges are:

* Anxiety for the future in light of the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor
* Racism, religious pluralism, matters of gender and sexuality
* Disaffiliation with the Church, decline in social influence, multiple forms of scandal, suspicion of institutions

Rather than rail against “the times,” we, as Church, must be self-critical, while also discerning together possibilities for faithful changes in our structures and forms of decision making. As Church, our responsibility includes being alert and open to the movement of the Spirit. It requires that we never cease to ask whether what we do reflects the Gospel.

Synodality, at the heart of which is truly listening to each other and to the Spirit, gives us the opportunity to live and love as people of hope, even in this complex moment. We welcome this challenge with honesty, courage and joy.

The following poem by Joyce Rupp inspires us to love, to listen and to act.

**Welcoming a New Time**

A new time stands at my doorstep

ready to enter my life’s journey.

Something in me welcomes this visitor:

the hope of bountiful blessings

the joy of new beginnings

the freshness of unclaimed surprises.

Something in me rebuffs this visitor:

the swiftness of the coming

the boldness of the entrance

the challenge of the good-bye.

Something in me fears this visitor:

the unnamed events of future days

the wisdom needed to walk love well

the demands of giving away and growing.

A new time stands at my doorstep.

With fragile caution I move

to open the door for its entrance.

My heart leaps with surprise, joy jumps in my eyes

for there beside this brand-new time

stands my God with outstretched hands.

**QUESTIONS 3 (Jim De Quattro)**

What challenge or challenges stir fear in you?

Which challenges do you welcome and how have you already opened a door to them?

How does the synodal process offer you hope and a path for participation, communion, and mission?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE** **(Betty:** Share slide; Judy will time 2:00 & chime.**)**

Judy: Maria Desjardins will lead our sharing.

**SHARING (Maria Desjardins)**

We invite you to share the essence of 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. *[pause]*

Now who would like to start our sharing?

[Time for people to share their personal reflections.]

[If there is extended silence during the sharing:] Is there anyone else who would like to share?]

[Stop by 11:20]

Thank you. Let us pause for a minute of silence to hold on to all that has been said. *[Long pause.]* We can continue after the final song, as we often do.

Let us now turn to God in prayer.

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY (Sr. Jacqueline Quinn)**

Let’s take time to notice the prayers that arise in us now.

Our response will be **Spirit of the Living God, hear us**.

(Pause)

For the Church, that we may truly listen to one another and the Spirit as we confront the challenges ahead, we pray: **Spirit of the Living God, hear us**.

For all grandmothers, mothers, mothers-to-be, and mother figures for their devotion to children and youth, we pray: **Sprit of the Living God, hear us.**

For the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. May we unite with them in our desire to be recreated for your purpose in this place and in this time. For this we pray**: Spirit of the Living God, hear us.**

For our elected officials, that they find the courage and resolution to make necessary changes to gun laws and that all citizens support serious efforts to overcome the contagion of gun violence, we pray: **Spirit of the Living God, hear us.**

For what else, shall we pray?

[Time for people to share their own prayers.]

Thank you.

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.

**OFFERTORY (Kathy Linabery)**

Knowing that we will never be orphaned, let us be open to the indwelling of the movement of the Spirit as she guides us in every way.

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(Betty will play:**) (Cary Landry –** **I Will Never Forget You, My People)\_** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUEZk4k8EjM>

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION (Suzie 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 cup,

gifts of the earth and 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, give us confidence in you and in one another.

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

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**THE PRAYER OF JESUS (Betty Thompson)**

Let us join our hearts as if we could join our hands to pray in harmony with our family throughout the world. We use 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 echo 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.

**FINAL BLESSING (Jim De Quattro)**

On this Mothers’ Day, let us now all raise our hands in a special blessing for **all** mothers (biological, adoptive, spiritual, and honorary)

Loving God, just as Mary nourished Jesus with unconditional love, all caring mothers, in countless ways, lavish love on their children and others. We ask you to bless them and help them feel the strength of your continued presence as they deal with sometimes challenging situations. Spirit of the Living God, help them know that they are loved for who they are and for all they do. Amen

(Jim)\_Let us now all sing our closing song, Sing a New Church

**CLOSING SONG Sing a New Church by** Delores Dufner, OSB

**(** **<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETV1DXQk_Gk>)**

Summoned by the God who made us,  
rich in our diversity,  
Gathered in the name of Jesus,  
richer still in unity.

Refrain: Let us bring the gifts that differ  
and, in splendid, varied ways,  
sing a new Church into being,  
one in faith and love and praise.

Radiant risen from the water,  
robed in holiness and light,  
male and female in God’s image,  
male and female, God’s delight. Refrain

Trust the goodness of creation;  
trust the Spirit strong within.  
Dare to dream the vision promised,  
sprung from seed of what has been. Refrain

Bring the hopes of every nation;  
bring the art of every race.  
Weave a song of peace and justice;  
let it sound through time and space. Refrain

Draw together at one table,  
all the human family;  
shape a circle ever wider  
and a people ever free. Refrain

**RESOURCES**

Reading 3. “The Church and Contemporary Challenges” C21 Resources by Guest Editor, Richard Lennon. and [www.ncronline.org/sections/spirituality/sunday-resources](http://www.ncronline.org/sections/spirituality/sunday-resources), Sister Mary McGlone commentary for the 6th Sunday of Easter 2023

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Fr. Roger Karban commentaries, <https://fosilonline.com/>

Sister Joyce Rupp, *Return to The Root: Reflections on the Inner Life*, p. 71.