**Solidarity with Sisters Communal Prayer for Sunday, Nov. 15, 2020**

**33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**TECHNICAL CHECK-IN (Betty Thompson)**

I’m Betty Thompson and I welcome you here on behalf of Solidarity with Sisters.

We sent the files of readings, responses, and lyrics.

Camera, Gallery/Speaker view. Second screen? Mute/unmute, even during singing.

**I will now mute everybody. Unmute to speak.**

Now let’s put technical things aside.

**WELCOME (Betty Thompson)**

Welcome, everyone!

Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?

Thanks to Ann Jelen and Bob Gallagher for preparing today’s communal prayer and to Stu Sklamm and Reggie Ott for making our music.

Thanks to the people who will be reading and leading us in prayer today: Lynn Bufka,

Jim De Quattro, Richard McGinnis, Joan Sklamm, and Stu Sklamm.

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

**SETTLING IN (Suzie De Quattro)**

Settle into a comfortable position. Feel any tightness in your body and let your muscles loosen. Notice your thoughts and try to put aside those that distract you. Notice your breath as it goes in and out. As you exhale, let tensions leave you. As you inhale, feel God’s love flowing into you. And now let’s take 3 deep breaths. One to be here… one to be together….and one to create space for how God will lead us today.

Now Stu Sklamm will lead us into our celebration with our opening song.

**OPENING – Eye has not seen** Words and Music: Marty Haugen **(Stu Sklamm)**

**Chorus:** Eye has not seen,
ear has not heard
what God has ready
for those who love him;
Spirit of love, come,
give us the mind of Jesus,
teach us the wisdom of God.

**Verse:**

Our lives are but a single breath,

we flower and we fade,

yet all our days are in your hands

so we return in love what love has made. **Repeat Chorus**

**GREETING (Bob Gallagher)**

Children of light, rejoice! The Spirit of God is with us in the darkness!

 **Response:** And all God’s people reply: Amen! Alleluia

**CALL TO WORSHIP (Bob Gallagher)**

We come together today because it is with each other that we experience ourselves as the people of God and the body of Christ. We are confident that in this next hour God will act in us and through us. We believe that God will give us light and courage for our next steps.

**GATHERING PRAYER (Bob Gallagher)**

O God who creates and who gives breath,

be with us now as we come to you

with the great longings of our world

and of our selves.

We come together

trusting that the Spirit will be at work in us.

Help us to let go and to let come.

Help us to live the questions

and to move with you, in you, and toward you,

ever open to what is waiting to be born in us.

Amen.

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME (Ann Jelen)**

As we gather today, we are reminded that we are children of the light and that we must be good stewards of all that we have been given. In 1 Thessalonians, Paul writes for early Christians who expected to be alive at the Second Coming. To them, “the day of the Lord” meant the time when judgment will come to the guilty and deliverance to the faithful. He tells this community that, although they do not know the time and place, the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. He encourages these believers to see themselves as children of the light, to stay alert and to be ready for his coming. Today we too are waiting for the day of the Lord. If we are wakeful and live in readiness, this time of waiting can be salvation, not judgment.

In Matthew 24:14-17, Jesus tells the parable of the master who divided his talents among three servants to illustrate what readiness may look like. At the time of Jesus, a talent was not natural ability or skill, but a unit of coinage of very high value. When the Master returns after a long absence, he wants an accounting of what they did with what he entrusted to them. The Gospel suggests that the constant wakefulness demanded in Paul’s letter requires fruitful action and even boldness in using the talents entrusted to us.

In our third reading, excerpts from the sermon by Rose Lue at *Catholic Women Preach* give us examples of how we may nurture boldly what has been entrusted to us. The message of all the readings can be summarized in the following: we are entrusted, we act boldly without fear, and we share our talents with the world rather than hide them.

Now Richard McGinnis will read from Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians

**READING 1:** 1Thessalonians 5:1-6 **(Richard McGinnis)**

Concerning times and seasons, brothers and sisters,

you have no need for anything to be written to you.

For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come

like a thief at night.

When people are saying, “Peace and security,”

then sudden disaster comes upon them,

like labor pains upon a pregnant woman,

and they will not escape.

But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness,

for that day to overtake you like a thief.

For all of you are children of the light

and children of the day.

We are not of the night or of darkness.

Therefore, let us not sleep as the rest do,

but let us stay alert and sober.

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS 1 (Jim De Quattro)**

How do you feel about the warning that the day of the Lord may come unexpectedly?

How have you stayed awake while awaiting the day of the Lord? What challenges or graces does this present to you? How have you succeeded?

**Silence (Time and chime – 2 minutes – Betty)**

Now Stu Sklamm will read from the Gospel of Matthew.

**READING 2:** MT 25: 14-27  **(Stu Sklamm)**

Jesus told his disciples this parable:

“A man going on a journey

called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them.

To one he gave five talents; to another, two; to a third, one,

to each according to his ability.

Then he went away.

“After a long time

the master of those servants came back

and settled accounts with them.

The one who had received five talents came forward

bringing the additional five.

He said, ‘Master, you gave me five talents.

See, I have made five more.’

His master said to him, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant.

Since you were faithful in small matters,

I will give you great responsibilities.

Come, share your master’s joy.’

Then the one who had received two talents also came forward and said,

‘Master, you gave me two talents.

See, I have made two more.’

His master said to him, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant.

Since you were faithful in small matters,

I will give you great responsibilities.

Come, share your master’s joy.’

Then the one who had received the one talent came forward and said,

‘Master, I knew you were a demanding person,

harvesting where you did not plant and gathering where you did not scatter;

so out of fear I went off and buried your talent in the ground.

Here it is back.’

“His master said to him in reply, ‘You wicked, lazy servant!

So you knew that I harvest where I did not plant

and gather where I did not scatter?

Should you not then have put my money in the bank

so that I could have got it back with interest on my return?’”

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS 2 (Jim De Quattro)**

With which servant do you identify? In what ways do you connect with the servant?

What talents has God entrusted to you? How has fear affected your decisions about what to do with your talents? How has taking some bold action worked out for you?

**Silence (Time and chime – 2 minutes – Betty)**

Now Ann Jelen will read excerpts from Rose Lue’s sermon.

**READING 3:**

Rose Lue is a community organizer, justice advocate and spiritual companion. In addition, to serving in ministry in the Diocese of San Jose, CA, she is cofounder of a community called GoGatherAsOne whose mission is to promote and honor our universal unity as one humanity and one people of God

Rose Lue preaches:

As a mother of 3, I can readily insert myself into the Gospel story.  I can imagine being one of the servants receiving my 3 children as something being given to me by my master, God, to take care of. The story doesn’t indicate if the master gave any instructions to the servants of HOW to take care of the master’s possessions.  I know, for sure, that I wasn’t given any instructions in receiving my 3 children.

The servants in the story who were rewarded were those who took the talents given to them and somehow doubled them.  …Today we think of “talents” as something we are able to do easily or that which comes naturally to us, but let’s put that aside for now.  Let’s focus on talents as a unit of some value.

The servant that was given 5 talents and traded it for 5 more was rewarded.  The servant who had 2 and made 2 more was also rewarded.  But the servant who had one and buried it for safety so he could return it to the master was reprimanded.  What if the servant who had 5 and traded it, only had 1 or 2 or 3 to give back to the master?   The story doesn’t say.

All we know is that the servant who made use of what was given to him was rewarded and the servant who buried what was given to him, out of fear of losing what he had, was reprimanded.  I believe this is the point of the story.  It’s not that the servants doubled what they had received.  It’s that the servants who doubled their talents probably acted without fear.  The servant who buried the one talent did so out of fear...

Now, how does that translate to me and the children I’ve been entrusted to take care of?  Can I see the desire of God that I live in trust as I mother my children?  TOTALLY!!!  When I was pregnant with my first child, I was told it was easier to take care of the baby while the baby is in my womb than when they are birthed.  Motherhood isn’t easy.  And one never knows if you’re doing it “right”.  Like the servants, we are not given any instructions on what we are supposed to do with this precious human life we have been given.  I think, from the perspective of anthropology, my job as a parent is to nurture responsible and mature adults who will contribute to society.  Theologically, my role as a parent is to nurture their relationship with the Divine, to model for them what it means to be one of God’s creatures in this created world.  I am asked to do this in trust.  To fulfill my role in caring for what’s entrusted to me, without fear.…

Today we speak of a “talent” as a natural ability or skill.  Very much God-given.  How are we called to take care of the talents given to us?  Certainly, we are to use them without fear.  To claim what God has given us, to make use of it, and to live boldly in trust.  And when we do, the “talent” is multiplied….

For me, it’s the talent of being with people.  I can befriend all types of people.  There are no strangers for me; just folks I haven’t yet met.  I claim as a gift my love for people and for meeting people as they are.  I have co-founded a group called GoGatherAsOne and our mission to promote and honor our universal unity as one humanity and one people of God….

 …Consider the Gospel’s invitation to share the talents entrusted to you in trust and without fear.  Know that when shared in this way, there’s a promise of the talents being multiplied!  And if we all used our God-given talents in this way, we would be, in fact, cooperating with God in building, in realizing, a world where love, peace and justice reign.

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS 3 (Jim De Quattro)**

What specifically in your life has God entrusted to your care, possibly without instructions?

Caring for God’s work of creation has been entrusted to all of us. How are you bold and how are you cautious in working to “build our common home”? Do you see the multiplying effect of your effort?

**Silence (Time and chime – 2 minutes – Betty)**

Now Joan Sklamm will lead us in sharing.

**SHARING TIME (Joan Sklamm)**

We invite you briefly to share what emerged in your heart this morning as you listened and as you reflected on these readings. That helps us glimpse the many ways God is among us. We welcome new voices and we also know that the wisdom of the community includes both words shared and silent listening.

As you share your feelings, please use “I” or “me.” And let’s leave a bit of silence between speakers. A bridge of silence helps us take in what was just said and gives others the chance to gather their feelings to share.

So let’s begin in silence as we gather our reflections. (Pause for 30 seconds)

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

(Sharing)

Is there anyone else who would like to share? (Pause)

Thank you. Now Lynn Bufka will lead us in Community Prayer.

**COMMUNITY PRAYER** (**Lynn Bufka**)

O God, we express our desire to remain wakeful and alert for the coming of the day of the Lord. Help us recognize how we are called to take care of the talents given to us and to use them without fear — boldly in trust. We yearn to hear your words, “Well done good and faithful servant.”

 Our response will be: Holy One, hear our prayer.

God of Healing, give us patience to do what we must to fight the covid 19 virus with masks and good humor and bless the medical helpers and scientists who serve us so selflessly. For this we pray.

God of Justice, grant our President Elect and our Vice-President Elect and other officials the wisdom and understanding to enact just and merciful laws and regulations that embrace us as a nation of unity and common goals. For this we pray.

God of Love, help us to see all people in our country as brothers and sisters who want peace, unity and redemptive love for all people. For this we pray

God of Abundance, let our solidarity with Catholic sisters and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious teach us how to love our enemies. For this we pray.

Let us remember the feelings and prayers that arose in us as we shared reflections, and also the prayers we carry with us.

Now, for what else shall we pray? Please unmute yourself as you speak. Please end your petition with “For this we pray.”

(Shared prayers)

Loving God, we place all of our prayers, the spoken and unspoken, into your loving care. We will do all that we can to put our prayers into action — while entrusting the outcome to you. Amen.

**OFFERTORY (Bob Gallagher)**

As Pope Francis has said, “The proving ground for prayer is concrete love for one’s neighbor.” Let us take time silently to name something that we commit to offering others this week.

[PAUSE]

In thanksgiving for the presence of God’s great love, and in unity with the Holy Spirit, let us pray: God of Love, we commit to sharing our time, talents and treasures with our neighbors so we may ourselves be a light and witness to the transforming love so freely offered to us. Amen

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION (Bob Gallagher)**

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 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.

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.]

Let us invite God into ourselves so that we become God’s living presence. [Pause.]

Holy One, you transform us as you nourish us here.

May we nourish others with your presence.

Amen.

**OUR FATHER** **(Bob Gallagher)**

Now let us pray in harmony with Christians throughout the world in the words that Jesus gave us:

**All (muted):**

Our Father, who art 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 lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil

for the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

**FINAL BLESSING (Ann Jelen)**

Let us go forth in peace and understanding

in communion with each other

boldly sharing our talents with our struggling world. Amen

Now Reggie Ott will lead our closing hymn *On Eagle’s Wings*

**CLOSING SONG: ON EAGLE’S WINGS by Michael Joncas (Reggie Ott)**

You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord,

Who abide in His shadow for life,

Say to the Lord, "My refuge, my rock in whom I trust!"

**Refrain** And He will raise you up on eagles' wings,

Bear you on the breath of dawn,

Make you to shine like the sun,

And hold you in the palm of His hand.

You need not fear the terror of the night

Nor the arrow that flies by day.

Though thousands fall about you, near you it shall not come. **Refrain**

For to His angels He's given a command

To guard you in all of your ways.

Upon their hands they will bear you up

Lest you dash your foot against a stone.

And He will raise you up on eagles' wings,

Bear you on the breath of dawn,

Make you to shine like the sun,

And hold you in the palm of His hand,

And hold you, hold you in the palm of His hand.

Homily by Rose Lue at Catholic Women Preach:

<https://www.catholicwomenpreach.org/preaching/11152020>