**Solidarity with Sisters Communal Prayer for Sunday, January 24, 2021**

*“Speak your word into the world.” – Jan L. Richardson*

**CHECK-IN** and then Betty mutes everyone. **(Suzie De Quattro and Betty Thompson)**

**WELCOME (Suzie and Betty)**

(Suzie) Welcome, everyone!

* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?
* Black Books – We will be mailing the Saginaw Diocese Little Black Books for Lent to the people whose addresses we have from our Advent books. If you didn’t get an Advent book and want a Lenten book, please email us with your address. Everybody nearby, expect an email this week about how to pick it up from Suzie.
* We prepared today’s communal prayer.
* (Betty) We thank Stu Sklamm and Reggie Ott for leading our music.
* Thanks to the people who will be reading and leading us in prayer today: Alicia and George Urban, Jill McGowan, Jim De Quattro, Sister Jo’Ann De Quattro, Sister Jennie Lechtenberg, Anne Regan, Pat Gabig, Bill Fanelli, Dan and Karen McCarthy, and Ann Masters.
* (Suzie) If you’d like to read on future Sundays, please get in touch.
* Now Alicia Urban will help us move from getting here to being here.

**SETTLING IN (Alicia Urban)**

We are not all in the same place, but we can still be together by sharing a common breath.  So let us begin by slowly taking one collective breath together -  in and out.   With each breath let the Spirit of God settle deeper into you as your exhale tensions from your body and distractions from your mind.  In and out.   Now let’s take 3 more breaths.  One to be here…one to be together…and one to make space for what God has incarnated in you.

Alicia: Now Stu Sklamm will lead us into our prayer together.

**OPENING SONG**  **(Stu Sklamm)**

**Remember Your Love** (Psalm 25) by Darryl Ducote

Refrain: Remember your love and your faithfulness, O Lord.

Remember your people and have mercy on us, Lord.

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom should I fear?

The Lord is my life.. and my refuge; when I call, God hears. Refrain

O Lord, hear the sound of my call.. and answer me.

My heart cries.. out.. for your presence, it is you I seek. Refrain

**GREETING (Betty Thompson)**

Beloved Community, rejoice!

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

**CALL TO WORSHIP**  **(Jill McGowan)**

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 gather to celebrate the great fact that God is in love with us. We are confident that God will act in us and through us. We believe that God will give us light for our next step. We are in a tumultuous time with hope and uncertainty ahead but we trust that if we listen, we will hear God’s call as we continue our journey. And so let us pray.

**GATHERING PRAYER** **(Jill McGowan)**

God of prophets, God of grace, teach us how to be your community. Help us to hear your call and respond. May we inquire, nudge, and challenge each other to recognize what is ours to do in the world.

Amen.

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME (Suzie De Quattro)**

Today we are going to divide the Gospel into two parts. First we’ll focus on what Jesus meant in asking us to “repent and follow me.” Then we’ll hear Jesus call his first disciples to join him in creating a new community whose foundation is Love.

We can get tripped up by the word “repent,” which we usually associate with wrong-doing. Biblical scholars tell us that the English word “repent” has a different connotation for Jesus. He would have used the word metanoia which comes from two Greek words: Meta, meaning above; and Nous, meaning mindset. Jesus asks us to move beyond our mindset, to move beyond our instincts for self-interest and self-protection. To literally **change** our minds to be more like Jesus’ mind. To meet all people, regardless of their actions, with an empathetic heart.

The second part of the Gospel today asks us: What does it mean to follow Jesus? Last week we focused on our individual calls and Jesus’ question “what do you seek?” This week we will hear Jesus’ call to the first disciples. Notice that he calls a group to follow him **together.** These two different weeks give us time to focus on both aspects of Jesus call. This week we focus on the call to community.

When Jesus called them, Peter, Andrew, James and John didn’t abandon their boats forever. But they did turn away from them in their moment of metanoia that pulled them into something new. They turned from their work and followed Jesus. Together, they listened to him teach. And they believed the Gospel they heard. Gradually they formed the community that would carry Jesus’ Gospel into the larger world.

But first they went back to their boats and their neighbors. How did they talk with each other about the good news they heard from Jesus? What did they tell others? The Gospels say that they left their boats again and again to travel with Jesus. Together. Today we ask ourselves how that kind of life-changing metanoia happens in us and among us.

*(Slight pause)*

Now George Urban will read from the first chapter of the Gospel of Mark, followed by questions and silence for reflection. Feel free to stay with whatever question calls you.

**READING 1**  **(George Urban)**

[Mk 1:14-20](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/mark/1?14)

After John had been arrested,  
Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God:  
“This is the time of fulfillment.  
The kingdom of God is at hand.  
Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS (Jim De Quattro)**

What is the Good News you believe in?

When have you experienced metanoia – perhaps by meeting an unfair situation with an understanding and vulnerable heart?

**SILENT REFLECTION** **(Betty:** Slide, time 2:00, chime, stop slide**)**

Betty:Now Pat Gabig will continue with the first chapter of the Gospel of Mark.

**READING 2 (Pat Gabig)**

As he passed by the Sea of Galilee,  
he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea;  
they were fishermen.  
Jesus said to them,  
“Come after me, and I will make you fishers of people.”  
Then they abandoned their nets and followed him.  
He walked along a little farther  
and saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John.  
They too were in a boat mending their nets.  
Then he called them.  
So they left their father Zebedee in the boat  
along with the hired men and followed him.

They went with him as far as Capernaum, and as soon as the sabbath came he went to the synagogue and began to teach.

And his teaching made a deep impression on them because, unlike the scribes, he taught them with authority.

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS (Jim De Quattro)**

How is your daily life disrupted by being part of a community that listens to the Good News of Jesus, and tries to live it?

How do you decide who speaks to you with authority? How has that changed over time?

**SILENT REFLECTION** **(Betty:** Slide, time 2:00, chime, stop slide**)**

Betty: Now Anne Regan will read “A Blessing Called Sanctuary” by Jan Richardson.

**READING 3 (Anne Regan)**

A picture containing text

Description automatically generated

You hardly knew

how hungry you were

to be gathered in,

to receive the welcome

that invited you to enter

entirely—nothing of you

found foreign or strange,

nothing of your life

that you were asked

to leave behind

or to carry in silence

or in shame.

Tentative steps

became settling in,

leaning into the blessing

that enfolded you,

taking your place

in the circle

that stunned you

with its unimagined grace.

You began to breathe again,

to move without fear,

to speak with abandon

the words you carried

in your bones,

that echoed in your being.

You learned to sing.

But the deal with this blessing

is that it will not leave you alone,

will not let you linger

in safety,

in stasis.

The time will come

when this blessing

will ask you to leave,

not because it has tired of you

but because it desires for you

to become the sanctuary

that you have found—

to speak your word

into the world,

to tell what you have heard

with your own ears,

seen with your own eyes,

known in your own heart:

that you are beloved,

precious child of God,

beautiful to behold,

and you are welcome

and more than welcome

here.

*(Slight pause)*

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS (Jim De Quattro)**

Where have you found sanctuary, the “circle that stunned you with grace”?

How do you feel when you leave the safety of sanctuary and instead **become** sanctuary?

What song do you sing deep in your being?

**SILENT REFLECTION** **(Betty:** Slide, time 2:00, chime, stop slide – then **Suzie)**

**Suzie:** Bill Fanelli will lead us in sharing our personal reflections. As our numbers grow, we are grateful for new richness from many places and diverse perspectives. Our sharing time is when we taste that richness. So that we can share together as one group, we ask you to distill your thoughts and speak the essence of your reflection so that many people can speak in the time available.

**SHARING TIME (Bill Fanelli)**

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.]

[Stop by about 11:20.]

Thank you.

Now Sister Jo’Ann De Quattro and Sister Jennie Lechtenberg will lead us in prayer.

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY(Jo’Ann De Quattro and Jennie Lechtenberg)**

We have just listened to God’s word – in scripture, in our reflections, and in our hearts and minds. Let’s pause in silence so we can each answer this question:

What is the longing of my heart at this moment – for myself, for my community, for people who are vulnerable? [Pause….]

As we offer our prayers, our response will be: Holy One, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for President Biden and Vice President Harris, that they be filled with wisdom “to advance justice and reconciliation, especially for those who are too often overlooked and left behind.” For this we pray. Holy One, hear our prayer.

Let us pray with President Biden for our country, that “we shall write an American story of hope, not fear. Of unity, not division. Of light, not darkness. A story of decency and dignity, love and healing, greatness and goodness.” For this we pray. Holy One, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for ourselves using the words of Amanda Gorman – that “love becomes our legacy and change our children's birthright.” That “we will rebuild, reconcile, and recover, And that in this new dawn we’re “brave enough to see [the light] and brave enough to be it.” For this we pray. Holy One, hear our prayer.

Let us pray that prophets will arise who express truth in ways that enable people of different perspectives to build a foundation for mutual trust. For this we pray. Holy One, hear our prayer.

That us pray that we commit anew to Jesus’ call to nonviolence, and that we may express nonviolence in our thoughts, our actions, our language, and in what we support with our time and resources. For this we pray. Holy One, hear our prayer.

O God of metanoia, thank you for the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. Catholic sisters and others show us how to focus on living your Gospel so completely that we move beyond our instincts for self-protection and self-interest. For this we pray. Holy One, hear our prayer.

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

(Shared prayers)

O Great Love, we place all of our prayers, those spoken and those unspoken, into your care, and we entrust the outcome to you. As we do, we use the words of Bishop Ken Untener: “This is what we are about: We plant seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects beyond our capabilities…. We are prophets of a future not our own.” Amen.

**OFFERTORY (Ann Masters)**

Often, through our shared reflections, we discern a call to take some kind of action.

Let us now take time to name within ourselves something we will offer to others this week in recognition of all that we have received from God. [Pause.]

In thanksgiving for the presence and power of Jesus Christ, and in unity with the Holy Spirit, let us pray. God of abundance, we commit to sharing our time, talents, and treasures so we that we may be a light and a witness to the transforming love of Jesus Christ. Amen.

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION (Karen McCarthy)**

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.

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 in our world. [Pause.]

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

May we nourish others with your presence.

Amen.

**OUR FATHER (Dan McCarthy)**

Now let us join our hearts as if we could join our hands to 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 thy 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 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 (Suzie De Quattro)**

Let us extend our hands over each other and bless each other in Paul’s words to the Ephesians:

Out of God’s infinite glory, may God give us the power through the Spirit

for our hidden selves to grow strong, so that Christ may live in our hearts through faith.

And then, planted in love and built on love,

and with all the saints,

may we be filled with the utter fullness of God.

Glory be to God whose power, working in us,

can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.

Amen.

**CLOSING SONG: City of God by Dan Schutte (Reggie Ott)**

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.

Refrain: 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 God’s people to set their hearts free. Refrain

God is light. In God there is no darkness.  
Let us walk in God’s light, God’s children one and all.

O comfort my people, make gentle your words.  
Proclaim to my city the day of her birth. Refrain

**RESOURCES**

Ronald Rolheiser, OMI, “From Paranoia to Metanoia.” <https://ronrolheiser.com/from-paranoia-to-metanoia/#.X_zHiRZOnIU>

“A Blessing Called Sanctuary” by Jan L. Richardson, in the beautiful free online booklet *The Sanctuary Between Us* at <https://sanctuaryofwomen.com/WomensChristmasRetreat2021.pdf>

“Gold Circle on Blue” by Patricia Pinto

<https://www.greatbigcanvas.com/view/gold-circle-on-blue,2563460/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI7-KFi8Gt7gIViJWzCh0kXANxEAQYASABEgLg9_D_BwE>

Fr. Kevin O’Brien’s homily at the pre-Inauguration mass on January 20, 2021: <https://www.jesuits.org/stories/read-fr-kevin-obrien-sjs-homily-from-the-inaugural-mass/>

Amanda Gorman’s poem at the Inauguration, “The Hill We Climb”:

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/20/politics/amanda-gorman-inaugural-poem-transcript/index.html>

President Biden’s inaugural address:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/01/20/inaugural-address-by-president-joseph-r-biden-jr/>