**Solidarity with Sisters Communal Prayer for Sunday, July 4, 2021**

***“Members of Christ, Priest, Prophet and King”***

**CHECK-IN** and then Betty mutes everyone.

**WELCOME (Betty Thompson)**

Welcome, everyone!

* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?
* Thanks to Mary Ott who prepared this communal prayer.
* Thanks to Reggie Ott for our music.
* Thanks to the people who will be reading and leading us in prayer today: Peggy Thompson, Jim DeQuattro, Judy Sholes, Ann Jelen, Lynn Bufka, Maryann Dolan, Alicia Urban, George Urban, and Sister Marie McCarthy.
* If you’d like to read on future Sundays, please get in touch.

**SETTLING IN (Betty Thompson)**

Let your breath bring you into quiet so you can be attentive to each other and to the Spirit. 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.

Now Reggie Ott will lead us into our celebration.

**OPENING – Here I am Lord (Reggie Ott)**

I, the Lord of sea and sky,  
I have heard my people cry.  
All who dwell in dark and sin  
My hand will save.  
I who made the stars of night,  
I will make their darkness bright.  
Who will bear my light to them?  
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord.  
Is it I, Lord?  
I have heard You calling in the night.  
I will go, Lord  
If You lead me,  
I will hold Your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of wind and flame,  
I will tend the poor and lame.  
I will set a feast for them.  
My hand will save.  
Finest bread I will provide  
'Til their hearts be satisfied.  
I will give my life to them.  
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord.  
Is it I, Lord?  
I have heard You calling in the night.  
I will go, Lord  
If You lead me.  
I will hold Your people in my heart.  
I will hold Your people in my heart.

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**GREETING (Suzie DeQuattro)**

Beloved Community, rejoice! The Spirit of Christ is alive in us! Alleluia! Alleluia!

All: Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Alleluia!

**CALL TO WORSHIP (Suzie DeQuattro)**

We remember how the Spirit of our loving God poured into the disciples and enabled them to share the good news in ways that everyone could understand, across all divisions. Today we hope for the same experience: for joy in the Spirit, and for capacity to share the Gospel. We believe that the Spirit will give us light for our next step. And now let us pray.

**GATHERING PRAYER (Betty Thompson)**

O God, 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 celebrate the great fact that you are in love with us. We want to live that love. Together we seek light for our next step. And let all your children say Amen.

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME (Mary Ott)**

The readings for the 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time bring up several issues. One of these is the role of prophets in the kingdom of God. Another is the reality that prophets are often rejected because of who they are and the hard truths they speak. These issues may seem unrelated to us, but at the time of our baptism the priest anointed us to be like Christ, using the words “Almighty God … now anoints you with the Chrism of salvation, so that you may remain members of Christ, Priest, Prophet and King, unto eternal life.” In baptism you join with Christ in this three-fold mission of prophet, priest, and king.

Today’s theme explores the roles played by three important prophets: Ezekiel, Paul, and Jesus himself. The readings help us understand how we too are prophets - messengers sent by God.   We will ask what is required for us to be a member of Christ, Prophet.

We begin with Ezekiel, a prophet who lived during the Babylonian captivity. Ezekiel describes his call to be a prophet—“The LORD spoke to me, the Spirit entered into me….” His call was to convey God’s message, not to change people’s hearts. However, people rejected him. Like Ezekiel, we are tasked with sharing the word of God to all people, even those who have predetermined that they will not hear the message.

*(Slight pause.)*

Now Judy Sholes will read from Ezekiel, chapter 2, verses 2-5, followed by questions and silence for reflection. Feel free to stay with whatever question calls you.

**READING 1 (Judy Sholes)**

As the LORD spoke to me, the spirit entered into me

and set me on my feet,

and I heard the one who was speaking say to me:

“Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites,

rebels who have rebelled against me;

they and their ancestors have revolted against me to this very day.

Hard of face and obstinate of heart

are they to whom I am sending you.

But you shall say to them: Thus says the LORD GOD!

And whether they heed or resist—for they are a rebellious house—

they shall know that a prophet has been among them.”

**QUESTIONS / PROMPTS 1 (Jim DeQuattro)**

Whom do you experience as prophets alive today? What makes them a prophet and what is their call to you?

When have you felt called to be a prophet, to convey God’s message? How did that situation feel?

**A group of people wearing colorful clothing

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**COMMUNAL SILENCE** **(Betty** Share **slide of Ezekiel**, time 2:00, chime, stop slide.**)**

**(Mary Ott)** In our second reading, St. Paul says that he had a “thorn in the flesh.” What exactly that was is not known. But the Lord said to him “My grace is sufficient for you….” Now Ann Jelen will read St. Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians, chapter 12, verses 7-9.

**READING 2 (Ann Jelen)**

Brothers and sisters:

That I, Paul, might not become too elated,

because of the abundance of the revelations,

a thorn in the flesh was given to me, an angel of Satan,

to beat me, to keep me from being too elated.

Three times I begged the Lord about this, that it might leave me,

but he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you,

for power is made perfect in weakness.”

**QUESTIONS 2 (Jim DeQuattro)**

How do you think power is made perfect in weakness?

If you had a thorn in your side, how would you feel about the Lord’s answer to Paul?

**A group of people climbing a tree

Description automatically generated with low confidenceCOMMUNAL SILENCE** (Betty Share slide of thorns w/questions, time 2:00, chime, stop slide.)

(Mary Ott) Our last reading today reminds us that Jesus was not recognized as a prophet by the people who knew him in his hometown of Nazareth. Now Peggy Thompson will read from St. Mark’s Gospel, chapter 6, verses 1-6.

**READING 3 (Peggy Thompson)**

Jesus departed from there and came to his own town, accompanied by

his disciples.

When the sabbath came he began to teach in the synagogue,

and many who heard him were astonished.

They said, “Where did this man get all this?

What kind of wisdom has been given him?

What mighty deeds are wrought by his hands!

Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary,

and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon?

And are not his sisters here with us?”

They found these things to be stumbling blocks.

Jesus said to them,

“A prophet is not without honor except in their hometown and among their own relatives

and in their own house.”

So he was not able to perform any mighty deed there,

apart from curing a few sick people by laying his hands on them.

He was amazed at their lack of faith.

*(Slight pause.)*

**QUESTIONS 3 (Jim DeQuattro)**

How do you think Jesus felt when his neighbors rejected him?

The people of Nazareth were not ready for God to act among them. Who or what in your town creates space for the Spirit to work?

A picture containing text, book, old

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

(Print of “The Holy Family in the Carpenter’s Shop”)

**(Mary Ott)** Lynn Bufka will now lead our sharing.

**SHARING (Lynn Bufka)**

We invite you to briefly share 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. So let’s begin in silence as we gather our reflections. *(Long pause.)*

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

*(Sharing.)*

Thank you.

Now Maryann Dolan will lead us in prayer.

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY (Maryann Dolan)**

We know that God alone is enough for us. So now we bring what is in our hearts to God. Our response will be: Loving God, hear our prayer.

God of prophecy, help us listen to today’s prophets and keep us from rejecting them and their messages. For this we pray. Loving God, hear our prayer.

God of wisdom, inspire the work of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious as they prepare for their Assembly in August. For this we pray. Loving God, hear our prayer.

God of liberty, bless the United States of America as we celebrate the 4th of July, Independence Day. For this we pray. Loving God, hear our prayer.

God of graciousness, we thank you for the gifts we have received. For this we pray. Loving God, hear our prayer.

Let’s remember the feelings and prayers that arose in us as we shared reflections, and also the prayers we carry with us. [Pause.]

Now, for what else shall we pray? Please remember to unmute yourself and end with “For this we pray”.

*(People speak. Respond:* Loving God, 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.

**OFFERTORY (Alicia Urban)**

In these months after Pentecost, we celebrate the amazing fact that the Spirit of God lives in us now and at every moment. What does it mean to offer yourself to God in gratitude? Is there an old or new call that you will commit to this week? *(Pause.)*

Let us pray. Generous God, Creative Spirit, we commit to sharing our time, talents, and treasures so that we may be a light and a witness to the transforming love of Jesus Christ. Amen.

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION (George Urban)**

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.)*

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 (Marie 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 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 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 (Mary Ott)**

Spirit of Love, we pray for your blessing in the words of Sister Sharlet Wagner. We thank you, God, that “It is not ours to see the future. Our task is not to create a plan for the new to emerge. It is to create a space for the new to emerge. For the young. For the growing diversities. A space where the Holy Spirit is free to work. If we can do this, the future will emerge. And it will be good.” Amen.

Now we will close with the song “This Land is your Land” by Woodie Guthrie, sung by Bruce Springsteen.

**CLOSING – This Land is Your Land**

<https://youtu.be/LkQzsDav-oI>

As I went walking that ribbon of highway  
I saw above me that endless skyway  
Saw below me that golden valley  
This land was made for you and me

I roamed and rambled and I've followed my footsteps  
To the sparkling sands of her diamond deserts  
All around me a voice was sounding  
This land was made for you and me

This land is your land and this land is my land  
From California to the New York island  
From the redwood forest to the Gulf Stream waters  
This land was made for you and me

When the sun come shining, then I was strolling

And the wheat fields waving and the dust clouds rolling

The voice was chanting as the fog was lifting

This land was made for you and me.

This land is your land and this land is my land  
From California to the New York island  
From the redwood forest to the Gulf Stream waters  
This land was made for you and me.

**Resources**

The Order of Baptism of Children, p. 30. Published by Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota.

St. Joseph Sr. Mary M. McGlone, July 4, 2021: Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, National Catholic Reporter (https://www.ncronline.org/sunday-resource/july-4-2021-fourteenth-sunday-ordinary-time).

https://stjoesmarion.org/news/readings-reflections-for-the-14th-sunday-in-ordinary-time.

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time | USCCB [https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/070421.cfm 1](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/070421.cfm%201).

022-ezekiel-calling.jpg from Free Bible Images (freebibleimages.org)

Photo of thorns by Mary D. Ott.

“The Holy Family in the Carpenter’s Shop,” drawing by Charles Eisen, circa 1755, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. (https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.83794.html).