**Solidarity with Sisters Communal Prayer for Sunday, Sept. 19, 2021**

“If anyone wishes to be first,

he shall be the last of all and the servant of all.” (Mark 9:36)

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

**WELCOME (Betty Thompson)**

Welcome, everyone!

* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?
* Thanks to Norb Bufka, Deb Ballard, Kathy & Lin Linabery who prepared this communal prayer.
* Thanks to Linda Donaldson and Reggie Ott for our music.
* Thanks to the people who will be reading and leading us in prayer today: Richard McGinnis, Kathy Cavanaugh, Alicia Urban, Kathy Linabery, Lynn Bufka, Bill Cavanaugh, Maryann Dolan, Jim De Quattro, George Fulk, Candy Fernandes, Judy Sholes, Sister Marie McCarthy, Norb Bufka, and Deb Ballard.
* If you’d like to read on future Sundays, please get in touch.

**SETTLING IN (Richard McGinnis)**

To be with God and each other, we need to first be with ourselves. Let your breath slow and deepen and carry ease into your body and your mind as we pray:

May I quiet my words and listen….

May I calm my thoughts and be….

May I soften my heart and open….

May I still my soul and receive….

*[Pause.]*

Now Reggie Ott will lead us into our celebration.

**OPENING – Gather Us In (Reggie Ott)**

Here in this place new life is streaming,

Now is the darkness vanished away,

See in this space our fears and our dreaming,

Brought here to you in the light of this day.

Gather us in — the lost and forsaken,

Gather us in — the blind and the lame;

Call to us now, and we shall awaken,

We shall arise at the sound of our name.

We are the young — our lives are a myst’ry,

We are the old — who yearn for your face,

We have been sung throughout all of history,

Called to be light to the whole human race.

Gather us in — the rich and the haughty,

Gather us in — the proud and the strong;

Give us a heart so meek and so lowly,

Give us the courage to enter the song.

Not in the dark of buildings confining,

Not in some heaven, light years away,

But here in this place the new light is shining,

Now is the Kingdom, now is the day.

Gather us in and hold us forever,

Gather us in and make us your own;

Gather us in — all peoples together,

Fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

**GREETING (Kathy Cavanaugh)**

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

**All:** Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Alleluia!

**CALL TO WORSHIP (Kathy Cavanaugh)**

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 (Alicia Urban)**

Spirit of the Living God,

teach us how to be servants to all -

to see one another with your eyes of love

and to recognize what is ours to do in the world.

May we inquire, nudge, and challenge each other

to imagine what none of us could conceive alone.

Amen.

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME (Kathy Linabery)**

In today’s Gospel, Jesus puts his arms around a child, who at that time and in that culture had no rights; was totally the property of their father and could be dealt with as such. Always the consummate teacher, Jesus places before us a child as a visual example for insignificant people. Like the disciples, perhaps we have been chosen not for our importance or even for our potential but because we are loved. The question Jesus places before us is this: How do we treat insignificant people? Our mission is to receive the little ones, the needy, the forgotten, and rejected. Our mission is to share the love we have been given so freely, humby serving and embracing all people, including those who are insignificant.

*(Slight pause)*

Now Lynn Bufka will read from the ninth chapter of Mark, followed by questions and silence for reflection. Feel free to stay with whatever question calls you.

**READING 1**  (**Lynn Bufka)**

They came to Capernaum and, once inside the house,

Jesus began to ask them,

What were you arguing about on the way?”

But they remained silent.

They had been discussing among themselves on the way who was the greatest.

Jesus sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them,

“If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all.”

Jesus placed a child in their midst,

And putting his arms around the child, Jesus said to them

“Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me;

and whoever receives me

receives the One who sent me.”

*(Slight pause)*

**QUESTIONS 1 (Bill Cavanaugh)** *(Pause after each question.)*

(**Betty:** Share Slide 1, Jesus holding a young girl.)

When has your sense of personal importance either helped or hindered your willingness to serve?

What does being the servant of **ALL** mean to you?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE (Betty:** Share Slide 2 image & questions; time 2:00, chime, stop slide.)

**Bill Cavanaugh:**George Fulk will read a minister’s reflection on one way to become a servant of all.

**Reading 2 (George Fulk)**

When I came to the church I am at now, I never felt it was below my dignity (or anyone’s) to scrub the toilets or clean the kitchen or scrub the floors. One way to become a “servant of all” is to find the jobs of service that few, if any, are willing to do. I never had a problem with too many people trying to take over what I was doing or eager to sign a signup sheet where certain duties for the church are listed. What I also discovered is when I started doing things that no one else would, it would inspire others to do the same. Of course, that’s not the reason I did it. I did it because it needed to get done. I never told anyone about it. Only later when someone noticed the bathrooms were clean did it come to surface that I did it. When they found out about it, I just smiled.

*[Slight pause]*

**QUESTIONS 2 (Bill Cavanaugh)** *(Pause after each question.)*

(**Betty:** Share Slide 3, Jesus holding a young girl.)

When have you ignored a need to serve because it was too menial?

How does it feel to have your service unnoticed?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE (Betty:** Share Slide 4 image & questions; time 2:00, chime, stop slide.)

**Bill Cavanaugh**: Maryann Dolan will read from selections – first, the mystic monk, Thomas Merton; followed by Ilia Delio a Franciscan sister and scientist.

**READING 3 (Maryann Dolan)**

“To be utterly dependent on other people. To be ignored and despised and forgotten. To know little of respectability or comfort. To take orders and work hard for little or no money; it is a hard school, and one which most pious people do their best to avoid.”

*[Slight pause]*

“Too often we reject people in their weaknesses; we refuse those with needs different from our own needs; we have no time for the poor or weak person. We are embarrassed by the weak and we seek to avoid them because we cannot accept or believe that this weak person is God and God is here in this weak flesh.”

*[Slight pause]*

To be compassionate, one has to be in the shoes of the person being served. To feel what they feel.

*[Slight pause]*

**QUESTIONS 3 (Bill Cavanaugh)** *(Pause after each question.)*

When have you served people who are utterly dependent? If not, what holds you back?

How do your weaknesses and vulnerability affect your approach and attitude toward the poor or weak person?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE** (**Betty:** Share slide 5, time 2:00, chime, stop slide.)

**Bill Cavanaugh: Jim De Quattro will now lead our sharing.**

**SHARING (Jim De Quattro)**

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,

As you share your feelings, please use "I” or “me". And let's leave a breath of silence between speakers. A bridge of silence allows us to take in what was just said and let it influence what we may want to share.

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 Sister Marie McCarthy will lead us in prayer.

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY (Marie McCarthy)**

We know that God alone is enough for us. At the same time, we have heard Paul say that “if there is anything you need, pray for it.” So now we bring what is in our hearts to God. Our response will be: Compassionate One, hear our prayer.

For the Leadership Conference of Women Religious as they ask not simply what they are to do for your kingdom, but how they are to be your love. For this we pray:

Compassionate One, hear our prayer.

For all to recognize their unique role as servant to all, for this we pray:

Compassionate One, hear our prayer.

For open minds to see how best to share our talents and treasures, for this we pray:

Compassionate One, hear our prayer.

For open hearts to release fear of paying the price for compassionate presence, for this we pray:

Compassionate One, hear our prayer.

For open hands and a desire to give and receive in a way that reflects your love, for this we pray: Compassionate One, hear our prayer.

Now 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 and mute yourself.

(People speak.) Compassionate One, 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.

**Marie McCarthy:** Mary Fernandes will now lead us in the Offertory’

**OFFERTORY (Mary Fernandes)**

In these months of Ordinary Time, we celebrate the amazing fact that the Spirit of God lives in us now and at every moment. 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 in compassionate service to all. Amen.

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION (Judy Sholes)**

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.

Let even our fragments be plenty to share.

Amen.

**Judy Sholes**: Norb Bufka will now lead us in the Our Father.

**OUR FATHER (Norb Bufka)**

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, Our Mother, 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 (Deb Ballard)**

Broken, we have gathered. Nourished, we reach out.

Now let us now go forth in peace:

in communion with each other

and offering communion to a hungry world. Amen.

**Deb Ballard:** Linda Donaldson will now lead us in our closing song.

**CLOSING – “The Servant Song” by Richard Gillard (Linda Donaldson)**

Will you let me be your servant,

Let me be as Christ to you?

Pray that I may have the grace to

Let you be my servant, too.

We are pilgrims on a journey,

We are travelers on the road,

We are here to help each other

Walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ light for you

In the night time of your fear;

I will hold my hand out to you,

Speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping,

When you laugh I’ll laugh with you.

I will share your joy and sorrow

Till we’ve seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven

We shall find such harmony,

Born of all we’ve known together

Of Christ’s love and agony.

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**RESOURCES**

**Bishop Kenneth Untener**

<http://www.visitationnorth.org/index.php/year-b-mark/73-twenty-fifth-sunday-in-ordinary-time-year-b>

**Rupp, Joyce**

**Boundless Compassion**

**ilia Delio, O.S.F.**

**Compassion: Living in the Spirit of St Francis**

**Thomas Merton**

**New Seeds of Contemplation**

**Source:**

REFLECTION | ‘Let the greatest among you be the servant of all’

By Interaksyon -November 5, 2017 - 8:09 AM

<https://interaksyon.philstar.com/lifestyle/2017/11/05/107359/reflection-let-the-greatest-among-you-be-the-servant-of-all/>

**Image of Jesus holding a little girl:**

<https://images-na.ssl-images-amazon.com/images/I/41giqq2auEL._AC_UL600_SR438,600_.jpg>