**Solidarity with Sisters - Communal Prayer**

 **October 17, 2021**

**29th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

As Christians, we are called to Servant Leadership

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

**WELCOME  (Suzie De Quattro)**

Welcome, everyone!

* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?
* Thank you to Mary Dolmage and Cecilia Estrada for preparing today’s prayer.
* Thanks to Linda Donaldson for our music.
* Thanks to the people who will be reading and leading us in prayer today: Sister Jennie Lechtenberg, Sister Jo’Ann De Quattro, Alicia Urban, Gail DeGeorge, Bill Cavanaugh, Ann Jelen, George Urban, and Cheryl Dowden.
* Heading to England…
* Not “ending at Pentecost.”
* If you’d like to read on future Sundays, please get in touch.

**SETTLING IN (Betty)**

Let’s move from greeting each other to greeting the presence of God living within us. Allow yourself to be drawn into this present moment. Notice what is all around you – the sights, the sounds, the support of your chair. Now deepen your breath and feel it filling you as you breathe in and out. . . in and out. . . Quiet your thoughts and find in the stillness the presence of Divine Wisdom. . . And now let’s take 3 deep breaths. One to be here. . . One to be together. . . And one to listen to the voice that is already speaking deep within.

 *(Pause)*

Please join us in singing our welcoming song.

**OPENING  SONG – “The Servant Song”** The Bukas Palad Ministry **(Betty)**

<https://youtu.be/k-Pk2NHKg_o> (play at 1.5 speed – begin at :10 mark)

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 ‘til we’ve seen this journey through.

 When we sing to God in heaven, we shall find such harmony,

Borne of all we’ve known together of Christ’s love and agony.

 Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.

**GREETING / CALL TO WORSHIP ( Cecilia Estrada )**

Beloved Community, together we treasure the immense gift of divine love!

Alleluia, Alleluia!

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

**GATHERING PRAYER ( Cecilia Estrada)**

O Gracious Mystery,

Keep us ready to be open to the needs of our neighbors,

Let us catch a glimpse of the joy we can experience in service to others.

Be with us as we work to listen, to be aware of others,

to persuade our hearts and actions to be good stewards of the Earth.

Guide us as we work to build a community based on the nurturing spirit of

Your joy. Amen

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME  (Mary Dolmage)**

Jesus models a radical way leadership - leading by love and serving others. And Jesus shocks the apostles with the message that leadership is an outpouring of self in service. An outpouring that will culminate in Jesus’ own death and resurrection.

Today’s reading falls within a section of Mark’s Gospel that depicts Jesus repeatedly revealing his eventual suffering and death, which the disciples repeatedly fail to understand.   Jesus challenges the idea that **those who lead rule over others**. This is the convention of authority in their time and in ours. Disciples who follow the way of Christ must turn this method of leadership on its head.

Jesus presents us with quite a different model of leadership. God’s power and leadership rise up and reach out, inviting people to follow. As a servant of others, Jesus teaches us how to be **servant leaders**.

*(Slight pause)*

Now Sister Jennie Lechtenberg will read from the Gospel of Mark 10:42 - 45.

Then Sister Jo’Ann De Quattro will offer questions and silence for reflection.  Feel free to stay with whatever question calls you.

**Reading 1 –** Gospel of Saint Mark **(Sister Jennie Lechtenberg**)

Jesus summoned the Twelve and said to them, “You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them and make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Anyone among you who aspires to greatness must serve the rest; whoever wants to rank first among you must serve the needs of all. For the Promised One has come, not to be served, but to serve - to give one life in ransom for the many.”

**QUESTIONS 1** *(Pause after each question)* **( Sister Jo’Ann De Quattro)**

When have you known a servant leader who rejects being a ruler? How did their leadership feel to you?

In what ways are you able to serve others that will inspire them to serve as well?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE**     **(Betty:** Share slide 1, time 2:00, chime, stop slide.**)**

Betty: Now Ann Jelen will read a reflection paraphrased from a selection by John Maxwell.

**READING 2 ( Ann Jelen )**

When you think of servanthood, do you envision it as an activity performed by low-skilled people at the bottom of the flow chart? Often, we assume that if we serve, people will lower their view of us. But this isn’t necessarily the case. Consider how highly we regard the parents who sacrifice for their family. Many people could think of their parents as servant leaders. People are drawn toward those who serve them sacrificially, they are not repelled by them.

Service adds value to people. Servant leadership is not about position or skill. It’s about attitude. Leaders seek ways they can add value to other. They may have power, but they put others first. They serve the people instead of the people serving them.

By really listening to the excluded and curing the sick Jesus showed us that being a servant to others is how to show love.

In John 13, the Savior of the world exhibited being of service to others. At the Passover feast, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. He instructed those with him, to do for others what he had done for them. His example was more powerful than a lecture about the principles of service. Jesus showed us that actions, not words, are the core of servant leadership.

And think about this: Jesus even washed the feet of Judas Iscariot, the one he knew would betray him. (pause)

Maybe that’s one reason why we hold Jesus in such high regard - because he served all. The challenge for us is to follow Jesus’ call to service for ”As I have done for you, so you should also do.”

**QUESTIONS 2** *(Pause after each question)* **(Sister Jo’Ann DeQuattro )**

Servant leaders have a strong commitment to the realization of a person’s full potential. How do you help others develop and thrive in God’s love?

What has it felt like for you to serve someone who may betray you?

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

Betty: We will now share a song from You Tube to help us consider today’s theme.

**Reflection: Make Me A Servant (Play at 1.5 speed) (Betty)**

<https://youtu.be/r6U8O_WnPZY>

*(Slight pause)*

**QUESTIONS 3** *(Pause after each question.)* **(Sister Jo’Ann DeQuattro )**

What motivates your service to others? Guilt, penance, love? Sympathy or solidarity?

Think about your gifts. For whom do you use them? Your community? Those who live on the margins? Those you may never meet?

What do you resist about being a servant leader?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE**     **(Betty:** Share slide 3, time 2:00, chime, stop slide.**)**

Betty:  Gail DeGeorge will now lead our sharing.

**SHARING  ( Gail DeGeorge )**

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,

And let’s remember to leave a bridge of silence between speakers.

Now we begin in silence as we gather our reflections.  *[Long pause.]*

Please unmute and mute yourself.

Who would like to begin our sharing?

(Sharing)

(Let sharing continue for about 20 minutes. Aim to end no later than 11:20.)

Thank you for your insights and thoughts.  We have to stop now, and we can continue after the final song, as we often do. Now let us pray.

Bill Cavanaugh will now lead us in the prayers of our community.

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY ( Bill Cavanaugh )**

Just sit for a minute with all that has been shared this morning, and notice what prayer is rising in you. *[Pause.]*

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: “Holy One, make us your servant.”

We ask that you grant us the confidence to navigate the challenges of our time with faith in the presence of the Spirit at our side. Let us pray. “Holy One, make us your servant.”

We ask for your blessings upon the work of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and the member congregations who act in so many ways to bring relief to the hungry, to the sick, to the abused and oppressed, to seek justice for racial minorities and for immigrants, and to foster reverence for all of God’s creation. Let us pray.

“Holy One, make us your servant.”

We ask you to fill us with the principles of servant leadership. Help us to be **community builders**, who will listen, be aware, and nurture others. Let us pray. “Holy One, make us your servant.”

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

What prayer is rising in you? Now, for what else shall we pray?

Please remember to unmute and mute yourself.

(People speak.) Let us pray. “Holy One, make us your servant.”

Thank you.

O God, we give you all our prayers, spoken and unspoken.

Your own example of servant leadership is calling out to us

day and night. Open our eyes and ears to those in need,

to live in awareness of your example,

and make us ever more able to take you in,

To understand more fully,

To know more deeply,

To have patience to listen well.

*(Slight pause)*

**OFFERTORY ( George Urban )**

Sit with the feeling of servant leadership. *[Pause.]* What does it mean to offer ourselves as servant leaders? How can you commit to becoming a servant leader this week? *[Longer 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

 *(Slight pause)*

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION ( Cheryl Dowden )**

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 wine,

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, make us your bread of abundance.  Make us your wine of joy.

Let even our fragments be plenty to share. Amen.

**OUR FATHER, OUR MOTHER                                                             ( Alicia Urban )**

Now let us join our hearts in the words of the Polynesian and Maori people and the New Zealand Anglican community:

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 (Cecilia Estrada)**

Lord Jesus, you did not regard divinity as something to cling to but emptied yourself to become a servant.

May your example teach us how God values those who serve others,

and never to fear humility.

May the Spirit of God enlighten our minds, guide our actions,

And unite us in loving service to all we meet. And may everyone

you meet be a blessing to you.

And to all this we say, Amen!

Let us close by joining Linda Donaldson and sing, “And They’ll Know We Are Christians”

**CLOSING SONG:  And They’ll Know We Are Christians (Linda Donaldson)**

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord;
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord;
And we pray that all unity will one day be restored.

Chorus: And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,

yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand;
We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand;
And together we'll spread the news that God is in our land.

Chorus: And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,

yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

We will work with each other, we will work side by side;
We will work with each other, we will work side by side;
And we'll guard each other's dignity and save each other's pride.

Chorus: And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,

 yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

**RESOURCES**

By John Maxwell, from the article, “21 Laws: Jesus and the Law of Addition, A Visual Aid About Adding Value” found in the [*NIV Maxwell Leadership Bible*](https://store.faithgateway.com/products/niv-maxwell-leadership-bible-3rd-edition-hardcover-comfort-print)

“The Servant Song,” by Bukas Palad Ministries.