**Solidarity with Sisters Communal Prayer**

**February 13, 2022 - Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

*“I live and die in the arms of a loving, all-forgiving Father. An immense love always awaits me. It is towards love that I walk as life proceeds. Even when I fall, I fall into love.”*

*Anonymous.*

**HELLOs and then Betty mutes everyone (Betty Thompson)**

**100th Sunday (Suzie De Quattro, Judy Sholes, Betty)**

**WELCOME (Richard McGinnis)**

Welcome, everyone!

* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?
* I prepared today’s communal prayer.
* Thanks to Linda Donaldson and Debra Street for leading our music.
* Thanks to the people who will be reading and leading us in prayer today:

Bill Fanelli, Anne Regan, Kate Monagan, Sr. Jo’Ann De Quattro, Sr. Jennie Lechtenberg, Paula Lake, Sr. Marie McCarthy, Lynn Bufka, Karen McCarthy, Mia Brown, Tim Brown, Norb Bufka, and Judy Sholes.

* For those of you who may want to stay with the theme for today for a few moments after the end of the service, I have appended a short contemporary poem by Chuck Lathrop in the Resources.
* In honor of Black History Month, also included in the Resources is a link to a moving rendition of “Lift Every Voice and Sing” by singers from the Berklee College School of Music.
* If anyone would like to be a reader in the future, please contact us.

**SETTLING IN (Bill Fanelli)**

Let’s move from greeting each other to allowing our hearts to become still for the coming of God. Settle into a comfortable position….Notice your breath as it goes in and out…. Let’s take 3 deep breaths. One to be here… one to be together...and one to celebrate with joy our being with God and with one another.

**Richard:** Now Linda Donaldson will lead us in our opening hymn:

**OPENING  SONG – “Will You Let Me Be Your Servant” (Linda Donaldson)**

   V1.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.

 V2. We are pilgrims on a journey; we’re together on the road.

We are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.

 V4. 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.

 V.6. 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.

**GREETING (Bill Fanelli)**

Beloved community, we are a people blessed by God! Let us rejoice! Alleluia! Alleluia!

All: Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Alleluia!

**GATHERING PRAYER (Anne Regan)**

“At God’s table of justice, everyone has a place and none are turned away.

Here strangers are welcomed as friends, the poor sit alongside the rich, and the upside-down-kin-dom of God is revealed.

At God’s table of abundance, a banquet of righteousness and liberation is set for all.

Here the powerless are heard, the outcasts are showered with honour, and the inside-out kin-dom of God is revealed.

At God’s table of life, all peoples know peace and creation flourishes.

Here the hopeless are nourished with possibility, the complacent are transformed into advocates for change.”

As we listen today to the readings and the sharing, let us open our hearts to the power of the Spirit so that we may be uplifted in faith and hope, and become instruments of God’s mercy to one another. Amen.

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME (Richard McGinnis)**

Three Sundays ago, we were exhorted by the words of Nehemiah not to mourn, not to weep, and not to be sad.

Today, we will explore the connection between mourning and weeping--and authentic happiness.

In our readings, Jeremiah listsblessings and woes. He calls upon us to trust in God. Then we hear Paul exhort us to have faith in the risen Christ. Luke also sets forth blessings and woes, which we call The Beatitudes. We will hear how blessedness comes to those who share Christ’s concern for the suffering of others.

Father Anthony Kadovil writes that true happiness, or beatitude, lies in the awareness that we are all children of a loving, watchful God. We will be happy only when we share with those in need and work in solidarity with them.

**Richard:**  Now Sister Jo’Ann De Quattro will read from Jeremiah and Sister Jennie Lechtenberg will read from the Letter to the Corinthians Then Kate Monagan will offer questions for our reflection. You are free to stay with whatever question calls you.

*(Slight pause)*

**READING 1a: Jer 17:5-8 (Jo’Ann De Quattro)**

Thus says Yahweh:

 Cursed are those who trust in human ways,

 Who rely on things of the flesh,

 Whose heart turns away from Yahweh.

 They are like a barren bush in the desert

 With no hope in the future,

 But standing in an empty and desolate earth.

 Blessed are those who put their trust in God

 For God is their hope.

 They are like a tree planted beside the water

 That stretches out its roots to the stream.

 It fears not the heat when it comes;
                        its leaves stay green;
        in the year of drought it shows no distress,
                        but still bears fruit.

**READING 1b: 1 Cor 15:12, 16-17, 20 (Jennie Lechtenberg)**

Brothers and sisters:

If Christ is preached as raised from the dead,
how can some among you say there is no resurrection of the dead?
If the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised,
and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain;
you are still in your sins.
But…Christ **has** been raised from the dead,…

**QUESTIONS 1** *(Pause after each question.)* **(Kate Monagan)**

When has your trust in the light of the Gospel allowed you to be resilient in rising above the opinions of others or adaptable in reforming a preconception of your own?

What has the power of the resurrection over sin and death meant to you in your life?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE (Betty:** Share slide 1 and image “Trust in the Lord”, 2:00, stop slide.)

**Richard:**  Now Paula Lake will read from the Gospel of Luke.

**READING 2 – GOSPEL** **LK 6:17, 20-26 (Paula Lake)**

Jesus came down with the Twelve….

And raising his eyes toward the large crowd that had gathered Jesus said:

            Blessed are you who are poor,
                        for the kingdom of God is yours.
            Blessed are you who are now hungry,
                        for you will have your fill.
            Blessed are you who are now weeping,
                        for you will laugh.
            Blessed are you when people hate you,
                        and when they exclude and insult you,
                        and denounce your name as evil
                        on account of me.

Rejoice when that day comes and dance for joy!
Behold, your reward will be great in heaven.
For their ancestors treated the prophets in the same way.

            But woe to you who are rich,
                        for you are having your consolation now.             Woe to you who have plenty to eat now,
                        for you will be hungry.
            Woe to you who laugh now,
                        for you will grieve and weep.
            Woe to you when all speak well of you,
                        for this is the way their ancestors treated the false prophets.

**QUESTION 2** *(Pause after each question.)* **(Kate Monagan)**

How have you experienced the faithfulness of people who have little money, little food, or are in other ways bereft or persecuted?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE** **(Betty:** Share slide and image of “Mourning with Those Who Mourn”; time 2:00, chime, stop slide.**)**

**Richard:**  Sr. Marie McCarthy will read an excerpt adapted from an article by Sister Mary M. McGlone entitled “Priceless Blessedness”.

**READING 3 (Marie McCarthy)**

Luke wrote his Gospel for a community like ours, people who lived in an economically and socially unequal society.

A central feature of this Gospel is Jesus’ special concern for women and for people who were poor, disabled, marginalized, or viewed as sinners. He advised his wealthy contemporaries to be sure to include them in their banquets.

What are we who live in great comfort to make of this presentation of the “good news?”

The well-off seem constitutionally ineligible for the Beatitudes that Jesus presents until we come to the third, “Blessed are they who weep.” In Luke’s Gospel, people weep for reasons of love or compassion.

In today’s world the blessed who weep are people who share God’s concern for the poor and the hungry. When they understand that theirs are the only hands God can use to make a difference, their compassion will not let them rest until they go into action. They will feel impelled to make a difference. They will understand that they are implicated by what is said in “Laudato Si’, on Care for Our Common Home” by Pope Francis: “Every effort to protect and improve our world entails **profound** changes in lifestyles, models of production and consumption, and the established structures of power which today govern societies” ….

When others’ suffering leads people to work for change, they begin to belong to the category of those who will be hated, excluded, insulted and denounced on account of the Gospel. No one effectively calls for conversion or protests injustice without paying the cost. But their activity buys them a place among that mysterious group of God’s blessed ones whose hopes are shaped by the needs of their most vulnerable brothers and sisters. …they will experience a blessedness that is priceless.

**QUESTION 3** *(Pause after each question.)* **(Kate Monagan)**

For what do you weep?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE** **(Betty:** Share slide and the Jan Richardson image “ A Blessing in the Dust”, time 2:00, chime, stop slide.)

**Richard**: Lynn Bufka will lead us into our time of 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 the readings. What you share 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.

Let’s be sure to leave a momentary bridge of silence between speakers.

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

Please unmute yourself to speak, and mute again afterwards.

Who would like to begin?

(Sharing)

*[Let sharing continue for about 20 minutes or until 11:20.]*

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

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

Let us pause and gather the prayers that are rising in us. *[Pause.]*

Our response will be: God of blessing, hear our prayer.

We pray for the needs of the world and for the grace to examine our own lives.

* For all the people of the world who are poor; and for those whose comfortable living standards ignore the needs of the poor or contribute to their suffering, let us pray. God of blessing, hear our prayer.
* For those who are hungry, who never have enough food for minimal sustenance; and for those who over-consume or whose habits diminish the world’s resources and environment, , let us pray. God of blessing, hear our prayer.
* For those living in anxiety, depression or with any kind of sorrow or grief; and for those who cause their suffering or choose to ignore it, let us pray. God of blessing, hear our prayer.
* For those who are persecuted or excluded for any reason; and for those who demean or consider as inferior anyone who is different, let us pray. God of blessing, hear our prayer.
* For the faithful example of loving service demonstrated by the work of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and their member congregations, let us pray. God of Blessing, hear our prayer.
* In thanksgiving for this community of faith as it gathers for the 100th time. May we continue to be strengthened in our call and nudged to do together what no one of us could do alone. Let us pray. God of Blessing, hear our prayer.

For what else shall we pray? Please remember to unmute and mute yourself.

(People speak.) God of blessing, hear our prayer.

Thank you.

O God, we give you all our prayers, spoken and unspoken. We ask for our hearts to be open to your divine love from which nothing can separate us. May we choose to live and act in the fullness of your love for all our days. We will do all that we can to put our prayers into action – wh~~i~~le entrusting the outcome to you. Amen.

**OFFERTORY (Mia Brown)**

We make our offerings, small and large,

with the hope and confidence

that all we do,

all we offer,

all we say,

all we think,

and all we hope

will take root in this world

and be the source of new expressions

of God’s love,

of God’s justice,

of God’s character,

of God’s mission,

and of God’s reign.

May God’s will be done on earth as it is in heaven

through us,

alongside us,

despite us,

and for us.

Amen.

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION (Tim Brown)**

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 Earth and the 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.

**Richard.** Norb Bufka will lead us in prayer.

**OUR FATHER, OUR MOTHER (Norb Bufka)**

**All (muted):** Our Father, our Mother, who are 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 (Judy Sholes)**

Let us extend our hands in blessing of one another with the following words:

May God grant us the joy promised by Christ!
Not by shielding us from all sorrows and pain,
But by strengthening us to bear it, as it comes;

Not by making our path easy,
But by making us sturdy to travel any path;

Not by taking hardships from us,
But by taking fear from our heart;

Not by granting us unbroken sunshine,
But by keeping our face bright, even in the shadows;

Not by making our life always pleasant,
But by showing us when people and their causes need us most,
and by making us anxious to be there to help.

God’s love, peace, hope and joy be with you for the week ahead.

                                                                   – Author Unknown

**Richard. Debra Street will now lead us in our closing song.**

**CLOSING SONG--****“We are the Light of the World” by Jean Greif (Debra Street)** Reference for the melody: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_m_LiCY3MJQ>

V1. Blessed are they who are poor in spirit,

Theirs is the kingdom of God.

Bless us, O Lord make us poor in spirit;

Bless us, O Lord, our God.

Refrain: We are the Light of the world, May our light shine before all,

That they may see the good that we do. And give glory to God.

V2. Blessed are they who are meek and humble,

They will inherit the earth.

Bless us, O Lord, make us meek and humble;

Bless us, O Lord, our God.

Refrain: We are the Light of the world, May our light shine before all,

That they may see the good that we do. And give glory to God.

V3. Blessed are they who will mourn in sorrow,

They will be comforted.

Bless us, O Lord, when we share their sorrow;

Bless us, O Lord, our God.

Refrain: We are the Light of the world, May our light shine before all,

That they may see the good that we do. And give glory to God.

V8. Bless those who suffer from persecution,

Theirs is the kingdom of God.

Bless us, O Lord, when they persecute us;

Bless us, O Lord, our God.

Refrain: We are the Light of the world, May our light shine before all,

That they may see the good that we do. And give glory to God.

**RESOURCES**

* Anonymous Quotation. Sacred Space, Your daily prayer online.

https://www.sacredspace.ie/content/mark-322-30

* Opening Song.

“Will You Let Me Be Your Servant”, Selection from Glory to God, The Presbyterian Hymnal, Westminster John Know Press (First Ed. 2013), #727.

* Gathering Prayer.

Sourced, in part, from Westminster Sunday Bulletin for June 6, 2021, citing Leslie Penrose, United Church of Christ, https://www.ucc.org, adapted).

https://irp.cdn-website.com/d47646db/files/uploaded/WestWind\_Liturgy\_2021\_06\_06.pdf

* Introduction to Theme.

Inspired by Mary McGlone (see below) and

Fr. Anthony Kadovil; Reflections for the VI Sunday.

https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2019-02/sunday-reflections-17-february-2019.html

* Scripture.

Excerpted and adapted from https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/021322.cfm

* Reflection.

Adapted from Mary M. McGlone, CSJ, “Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Priceless Blessedness,” dated February 17, 2019. https://www.ncronline.org/news/spirituality/scripture-life/sixth-sunday-ordinary-time-1

* Offertory.

Sourced from Westminster Sunday Bulletin for June 6, 2021, citing (Mustard Seed, https://pilgrimwr.unitingchurch.org.au ,adapted)

https://irp.cdn-website.com/d47646db/files/uploaded/WestWind\_Liturgy\_2021\_06\_06.pdf

* Prayers of the Community.

Sourced, in part, Joan DeMerchant, Prayers: Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

https://www.ncronline.org/news/spirituality/scripture-life/sixth-sunday-ordinary-time-1

* Final Blessing.

Adapted from the “Blessing for the Dawn of a New Year” as quoted in flocknote dated January 5, 2022, Blessed Trinity Parish. mail@flocknote.com <mail@flocknote.com>

Closing Song--“We Are the Light of the World” by Jean Greif.

<https://liturgicalcenter.org/media/pdfy/Hymns/General_hymns/1023.pdf>

* Art.

Trust in the Lord.

https://live.staticflickr.com/7286/8724874566\_feca184357\_b.jpg

Mourning with Those Who Mourn

https://bycommonconsent.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/job-and-3-friends.jpg

* “A Blessing in the Dust”, Jan Richardson

Janrichardsonimages.com

* Black History Month

Lift Every Voice and Sing, Berklee College School of Music

<https://youtu.be/xit09LrjJUU>

* Contemporary Poem

“A Gentle Presence” by Chuck Lathrop.

Sourced from Westminster Sunday Bulletin for June 6, 2021, citing “A Gentle Presence” – a poem by Chuck Lathrop (in More Than Words, pp. 142-143)

<https://irp.cdn-website.com/d47646db/files/uploaded/WestWind_Liturgy_2021_06_06.pdf>

“For the church to call itself to work as Jesus did,

in poverty and under oppression,

is to seek an unaccustomed stance.

It is to be, stand, and operate from the point of view

of the world’s victims and losers.

It is to live and preach the gospel from the bottom up.

It is a falling down, a downward mobility, if you will,

into the commonality of human existence.

 It is neither nice nor comfortable.

In addition, it is confrontational and conflictual.

Because of such a stance, the church, while it is committed

 to and in the world, will also be at odds with the world as it is.

Such obedience to God will necessarily mean it will be

 a minority phenomenon, a threat to

 any political or cultural status quo.

The ramifications are many, the cost is high.”

* TRASNA by Sr. Raphael Considine, PBVM – Suzie makes reference to it about our 100th Sunday:

The pilgrims paused on the ancient stones
In the mountain gap.

Behind them stretched the roadway they had travelled .
Ahead, mist hid the track.

Unspoken the question hovered:
Why go on? Is life not short enough?

Why seek to pierce its mystery?
Why venture further on strange paths, risking all'

Surely that is a gamble for fools - or lovers.
Why not return quietly to the known road?

Why be a pilgrim still?
A voice they knew called to them, saying:

This is Trasna, the crossing place.
Choose! Go back if you must,

You will find your way easily by yesterday’s fires,
there may be life in the embers yet.

If that is not your deep desire,
Stand still. Lay down your load.

Take your life firmly in your two hands,
(Gently… you are trusted with something precious)

While you search your heart’s yearnings:
What am I seeking? What is my quest?

When your star rises deep within,
Trust yourself to its leading.

You will have the light for first steps.
This is Trasna, the crossing place.

Choose!
This is Trasna, the crossing place

Come !