**Solidarity with Sisters’ Communal Prayer for April 24, 2022**

**Second Sunday of Easter - Divine Mercy Sunday**

*“Peace be with you.” (John 20:19)*

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

**WELCOME ( Suzie De Quattro )**

Welcome, everyone!

* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?
* Thanks to Kathy and Bill Cavanaugh for preparing today’s communal prayer.
* Thanks to Linda Donaldson for leading our music today.
* Thanks to the people who will be reading and leading us in prayer today: Marilyn and Paul Voigt, Terri Butel, Kathy Linabery, Mia and Tim Brown, Cecilia Estrada, Mary Dolmage, Norb Bufka, and Bob Gallagher.

**SETTLING IN ( Betty Thompson )**

Let’s quiet ourselves so we can be attentive to what God hopes for us today. 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 welcome in the Spirit who never leaves us.

Now Linda Donaldson will lead us in our opening song!

**OPENING SONG: Prayer of St Francis: Make Me a Channel of Your Peace**

 **(Linda Donaldson)**

Make me a channel of your peace.

Where there is hatred let me bring your love

Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord.

And where there’s doubt, true faith in You.

Make me a channel of Your peace

Where there’s despair in life let me bring hope.

Where there is darkness, only light.

And where there’s sadness, ever joy.

Oh Master, grant that I my never seek

So much to be consoled as to console,

To be understood as to understand,

To be loved as to love with all my soul.

Make me a channel of your peace.

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

In giving of ourselves that we receive,

And in dying that we’re born to eternal life.

**GREETING ( Bill Cavanaugh )**

Let us rejoice, for Jesus Christ is risen! Alleluia! Alleluia!

**All:** Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia! Alleluia!

**CALL TO WORSHIP / GATHERING PRAYER**  **( Bill Cavanaugh )**

O Holy One, thank you for your gift of Easter peace.

Let your peace flow into us and through us as we put on your mind and your heart.

Teach our hearts mercy and forgiveness like yours.

Teach our minds creativity to build justice amid mercy.

May we inquire, nudge, and challenge each other

to imagine what none us could conceive alone.

Amen.

Now Kathy will introduce us to today’s theme

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME ( Kathy Cavanaugh )**

Today with the entire Church we celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday. Today we also begin a series of Sundays when, over and over, Jesus tells us, “Peace be with you.”

Jesus’ words offer us peace, give us the Holy Spirit, and send us out with the grace to forgive and the challenge to Believe. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, let us pay attention today to how we practice peace, forgiveness, mercy, justice and love.

“Peace be with you “ is a call to assuredness, believing that God is with us, and even more, that God suffers with those who are suffering.

In the face of violent atrocities and war, let us help each other remember that we are Easter people. Let us be witnesses of resurrection love to a world that so desperately needs it. Pope Francis tells us: “Thank Jesus for having entered through our closed door with His mercy, calling us, like Thomas, by name, and for giving us the grace to continue writing the gospel of Love.”

*(Slight pause)*

**Kathy :** Now Paul Voigt will read from the Gospel of John.

Then Marilyn Voigtwill offer questions for us to ponder in silence.

### READING 1 - GOSPEL John 20 : 19-29 ( Paul Voigt )

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Temple authorities. As it happened

Thomas was not with them.

Jesus came and stood before them. He said to them,

 “*Peace be with you*,”.

(*Slight Pause*)

Having said this, the savior showed them the marks of crucifixion.

The disciples were filled with joy when they recognized Jesus, who said to them again,

 “*Peace* *be with you*.”

( *Slight Pause* )

 As Abba God sent me, so am I sending you.”

After saying this Jesus breathed on them and said:

 “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven.

If you retain anyone’s sins, they are retained.”

( *Slight Pause*)

Eight days later the disciples were once more in the room, and Thomas was with them. Despite the locked doors, Jesus came in and stood before them, saying,

 “*Peace be with you*”.

(*Slight Pause*)

Then he spoke to Thomas, “Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side. Do not be unbelieving any more, but believe.”

Jesus then said, “You believe because you saw me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

*(Slight Pause)*

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS ( Marilyn Voigt )**

What doubts or closed doors limit your ability to show mercy?

What is this Peace offered by Christ and how do you bear witness to it?

How does the Holy Spirit guide you in forgiving and retaining sin?

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

**Betty**: Terri Butel will now read a reflection from The Vatican II Reflection on Peace.

**READING 2**  **( Terri Butel )**

**Friends, we gather as God’s Family, called to be Peacemakers in today’s world. May we enter into this time now, conscious of our high calling and open to God’s voice within us and among us.**

**Peace is more than the absence of war,**

**more than the maintenance**

**of a balance of power between enemies.**

**But then, what is peace?**

**We believe that peace is the result of justice.**

**When society is rightly ordered,**

**when people live as God intends,**

**then Peace reigns.**

**But while this is true,**

**we also realize that Peace**

**must be constantly built up,**

**human nature must be called**

**again and again to make Peace.**

**But even this is not sufficient.**

**We believe, further,**

**that Peace comes, in the end, from Love.**

**Unless people willingly come together**

**to share their talents and creativity,**

**Peace can not be achieved.**

**Love goes beyond what justice can achieve.**

**When we love our neighbor,**

**even those who irritate us**

**or alienate us,**

**then we give peace its only chance.**

**All of this loving attitude and behavior**

**connects us to Christ**

**who can bring real Peace.**

**Forgo violence,**

**speak with love,**

**and defend the weak—**

**for then you are in Christ**

**and the Peace of the world is at hand.**

*(Slight pause)*

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS ( Marilyn Voigt )**

In what way have you found God present in the face of grave injustice?

Who has been a peacemaker in your world?

How have you experienced ‘holy frustration’ that spurs you on to fight for justice?

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

**Betty:** Now Kathy Linabery will share a reflection about Shalom by Pat Marrin.

**READING 3 – REFLECTION ( Kathy Linabery )**

***Shalom*** is the Hebrew word for the kind of peace Jesus offered. It meant wholeness, completeness, harmony and total well-being. Because it was God’s gift, it could not be taken away or disrupted by human uncertainty or chance. It was like beatitude compared with happiness. Your blessing is not dependent on things going well or any happenstance. Even in the midst of trial and suffering, *shalom* grounds you in a relationship with God. It is like the “perfect joy” of St. Francis of Assisi. Every obstacle or frustration he encountered was another chance to trust in God and to give thanks.

We all experience some anxiety as part of daily life, and few possess self-confidence that cannot be ruffled by the ups and downs of personal relationships and the losses and disappointments that come with being human. Often, maintaining peace within ourselves depends on being productive and having the approval of others. Yet, even when these sources of equilibrium and self-satisfaction fail us, the *Shalom* of the risen Christ is the deep calm that comes from knowing that we are loved no matter what. if we need not fear death (the worst thing that can happen), then what should we fear?

Easter faith becomes a way of life and a habit of being when we remain in the intimate conversation with Jesus that is prayer. St. Paul counsels us to “pray always” to keep Jesus before our eyes and his voice in our hearts. “Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus” ( Rom 8;39).

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS ( Marilyn Voigt )**

Can you recall a time when you experienced Christ’s peace in the midst of tragedy?

What do you fear?

How do you go about finding Peace in your heart?

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

**Betty**: Now Tim Brown will lead us in our sharing.

**SHARING ( Tim Brown )**

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.

**Tim:** Now Mia will lead us in prayer.

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY ( Mia Brown )**

Let’s pause to notice the prayer that may be rising in your own heart right now. (Pause.)

Our response will be:

**Risen One, grant your loving mercy and peace.**

Holy Wisdom, be with the decision makers, faced with choices of how to defend in an unjust invasion, to imagine new possibilities for peace. For this we pray,

**Risen One, grant your loving mercy and peace.**

Holy Compassion, may all answer the call of Pax Christi International, to promote prayer, nonviolence and dialogue for peaceful conflict resolution; and pray for all who live in terrible fear for what the future brings, and for those courageous peacemakers in Ukraine and in Russia who work for peace in nonviolent ways. For this we pray,

**Risen One, grant your loving mercy and peace.**

Holy Creator, as we celebrate Earth Day, we thank you for the beauty of all that is around us.  Help us to pay attention to how all our choices affect our common home. **For this we pray. Risen One, grant your loving mercy and peace.**

Merciful One among us, keep us in solidarity with people who suffer from unjust and unmerciful systems, especially the people of Ukraine, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen who are suffering from the atrocities of war. For this we pray.,

**Risen One, grant your loving mercy and peace.**

Holy One beyond us, help us to recognize and learn your mercy and justice, together with the sisters of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. For this we pray,

**Risen One, grant your loving mercy and peace.**

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

(Shared prayers) **Risen One, grant your loving mercy and peace.**

Merciful One, we place all of our prayers, those spoken and those unspoken, into your loving care. We will do all that we can to put our prayers into action – while entrusting the outcome to you. Amen.

 **OFFERTORY ( Mary Dolmage )**

In this Easter season, we celebrate the amazing gift of Christ among us. Identifying as a disciple of Jesus Christ is not simply a matter of whether we believe or we don’t. Rather, it is about what we do with our belief. What will you do this week with your belief in Christ among us? [Pause.]

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 ( Cecilia Estrada )**

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 to them, “Do this in remembrance of me.” *(Mark 13:15)*

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.]*

Let us invite God into ourselves so that we become God’s living presence in our world.

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

May we nourish others with your presence.

Amen.

Now **Norb Bufka** will lead us in joining our hearts, as if we could join our hands, to pray in harmony with our family throughout the world

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

Our Father, Our Mother, who art in heaven,

hallowed be your name.

Your Kin-dom 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 Kin-dom, the power, and the glory are yours,

now and forever. Amen!

**FINAL BLESSING ( Bob Gallagher )**

**“For Peace” by John O’Donohue**

May there be

an opening

into the quiet

that lies beneath

the chaos,

where you find

the Peace

you did not think

possible

and see what shimmers

within the storm.

Amen.

Please sing along with the Children’s Hope Virtual Choir in the prayer “Let There Be Peace On Earth.”

**CLOSING SONG** <https://youtu.be/bgL1v8FZaNM>

The Children’s Hope Virtual Choir, “Let There Be Peace On Earth”.

**RESOURCES**

Gospel Reading from “The Inclusive Bible,” John 20; 19-29 (2007 by Priests for equality)

“The Gift of Shalom” adapted from Pencil Preaching by Pat Marrin

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/spirituality/pencil-preaching/gift-shalom>

Vatican II Prayer/Reflection adapted from “People of God at Prayer: 18 Services in the Spirit of Vatican II by Bill Huebsch, (2000)

Quote from Pope Francis; “The Gospel of Luke: A Spiritual and Pastoral Reading” (Orbis, 2019)

Pax Christi International, “The Crisis in Ukraine - Give Peace a Chance” (Feb. 23, 2022) [www.paxchristi.net](http://www.paxchristi.net)

Community Prayers inspired by Sr. Nancy Sylvester, IHM Institute for Communal Contemplation and Dialogue and IHM Spirituality Ministries weekly “Prayer for Peace in Ukraine” on Wednesdays 12 PM EST.

<https://iccdinstitute.org/>