**Solidarity with Sisters’ Communal Prayer for Sunday, May 29, 2022**

Jesus said: “so that they may be one as we are one….”

**HELLOs** and then Betty mutes everyone. **Betty Thompson**

**WELCOME Kathy Linabery**

Welcome, everyone!

* Norb, Lin and I had privilege of preparing this communal prayer.
* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?
* Thanks to Reggie Ott & Debra Street & Keith Miller for our music.
* Thanks to the people who will be reading and leading us in prayer today: Kathy & Bill Cavanaugh, Lynn Bufka, Deb Ballard, Peggy Thompson, Maryann Dolan, Terri Butel, Judy Sholes, and Ed Hutchison. If you’d like to read on future Sundays, please get in touch.

**SETTLING IN Betty Thompson**

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]*

**Betty:** Now Debra Streetwill lead us into our celebration.

**OPENING SONG: “I Have Loved You” by Michael Joncas Debra Street/Keith Miller**

Refrain:

I have loved you with an everlasting love, I have called you and you are mine;

I have loved you with an everlasting love, I have called you and you are mine.

1. Seek the face of the Lord and long for him: He will bring you his light and his peace Refrain
2. Seek the face of the Lord and long for him: He will bring you his joy and his hope. Refrain
3. Seek the face of the Lord and long for him: He will bring you his care and his love. Refrain

**GREETING Lynn Bufka**

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

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

**CALL TO WORSHIP Lynn Bufka**

We remember how the Spirit of our loving God poured into the disciples from their first

encounter with Jesus after Easter, on toward Pentecost. 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 Lynn Bufka**

O Great Love,

thank you for living and loving in us and through us.

May all that we do flow from our deep connection with you and all beings.

Help us evolve as a community that vulnerably shares each other’s burdens.

Listen to our hearts’ longings for the healing of our world.

We come together trusting that the Spirit will be at work in us

helping us to let go, and moving with you, and toward you in endless love.

Amen

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME Maryann Dolan**

In today’s Gospel for the Seventh Sunday of Easter, Jesus prays for the apostles, for those who will come to believe in him through their witness and for those who will believe in him through the centuries. Imagine that! Jesus is praying for us!

The story describes the beautiful unity existing between the Godhead and Jesus. In an intimate encounter, Jesus expresses his desire that all share in the same divine oneness that he shares with his Abba. Jesus expresses his desire for those whom he loves, namely, that they also share in the same divine oneness that he shares in with his God. This unity flows from love through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus and Abba are one because they love each other. Jesus wants us to participate in that love, to live in it ourselves. We are invited into a life where we dwell in that love which deepens with time. It is a gift given not because of one’s place or position in life but because of an abiding love that is forever self-revealing and distinctively unifying; a love in which we will learn to love one another and come to that unity for which Jesus prayed ….a unity not only with all now living on this earth but with all who have preceded us and those who will come after us.

*[Slight pause]*

Now **Kathy Cavanaugh** will read from the 17th Chapter of John’s Gospel. Terri Butel will follow with questions and silence for reflection. Feel free to stay with whatever question calls you.

**READING 1: John 17 Terri Butel**

Looking up, his eyes to heaven, Jesus prayed saying:

“Abba, God, I pray not only for them,

but also for those who will believe in me through their word,

so that they may all be one,

as you are in me and I in you,

that they also may be in us,

that the world may believe that you sent me.

And I have given them the glory you gave me,

so that they may be one, as we are one,

I in them and you in me.

You have loved them even as you love me.

I made known to them your name and I will make it known,

that the love with which you loved me

may be in them and I in them.”

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS** *[Pause after each question.]* **Terri Butel**

As you listen to these words, do you sense the depth of Jesus’ love for you, for everyone? How is that love evident in your actions and words -- even towards your enemies?

What feelings arise in you as you listen to Jesus’ prayer for you?

How do you pray for the people you love? for everyone else?

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

**Betty:** Judy Sholes will read excerpts adapted from a book by Dominican priest, Albert Nolan. The book title is *Jesus Today: A Spirituality of Radical Freedom.*

**READING 2 Judy Sholes**

Today’s Gospel relates to us the very intimate **relationship** between Jesus and his loving Abba who embraces, holds, and protects his or her child. Some might associate this more with a caring mother than with a father; nevertheless, like the love of any good parent, it is a warm, unconditional and totally dependable love. This exceptionally profound experience of oneness with God as his Abba was the **source** of Jesus’ wisdom, his clarity, his confidence and his radical freedom.  *[Pause]*

We call this mystical union. *[Pause]*

Mystical union with God is not an experience reserved for some very special and privileged people. It is true that everybody does not have the same opportunities for exploring such a possibility. But Jesus did **not** think that he **alone** could experience an intimacy with God as his Abba. God is the Abba of **all**. We can **all** experience some measure of intimacy with God. In other words, we can all be mystics.

According to the frequently quoted prediction of the great twentieth century theologian, Karl Rahner, “The Christian of the future will be a mystic or will not exist at all.” *[Pause]*

**How** we get there is **another** matter….

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS** *[Pause after each question.]* **Terri Butel**

Remember a time, during moments of sadness and confusion or times of joy and clarity, when you experienced a profound oneness in the goodness and companionship of God.

Reflect on a time when have you experienced “radical freedom.”

How big is your God? How has your image of God evolved and drawn you closer as a beloved son or daughter?

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

**Betty**: Kathy Linabery will continue with a reflection based in part on Fr. Nolan’s writing.

**READING 3 Kathy Linabery**

This morning’s gospel invites us to continue to develop a deeper awareness of our oneness with God, with ourselves, with other human beings, and with the universe.

Like all other forms of life, our spiritual life ***evolves****,*interacting creatively with other people, our environment, and historical events, and responding to the opportunities that arise or missing them.  The inner work of personal transformation is like a creative work of art rather than like the planned step-by-step journey along a mapped-out road.  There Is no path that is forever fixed, as some spiritual writers seem to imply.  It is, rather, what Meister Eckhart calls a "Wayless Way."

Following the inspiration of Jesus himself, we propose that we will have to consider changes or mutations along the road to greater maturity, deeper consciousness, and radical freedom. We will not be alone in walking this and other similar paths of personal transformation.  The only way ahead is together, hand in hand , helping one another.  And yet, the place to start is with ourselves.

How we get to the union with God that Jesus prayed for us is precisely what spirituality entails.

What his disciples and friends found so extraordinary about Jesus was not just that he called God his Abba, but that he identified himself with Abba.    Jesus identified himself with a humble, compassionate, loving and serving God, and he was bold enough and confident enough to speak and act, as that kind of divinity - without qualification.

Our invitation is to develop a deeper awareness of our oneness with God, with ourselves, with other human beings, and with the universe.

That means taking purposeful time on a regular basis to reflect, meditate, and contemplate the presence of God in our lives. It requires humility above all else.

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS** *[Pause after each question.]* **Terri Butel**

In what areas of your life do you need to be more humble?

What nourishes your union with God?

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

**Betty:** Now, Bill Cavanaugh will lead our sharing:

**SHARING: Bill Cavanaugh**

We invite you to briefly share whatever is emerging 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 all voices, and we 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 as we sense how the Spirit is moving in us.

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? *[Let silence extend until someone is moved to*

*speak.]*

(Sharing)

*[If there is extended silence during the sharing:]*  Is there anyone else who would like to

share? *[Long-ish pause]*

*[Stop by about 11:20.]*

*[If needed]* “Those are wonderful points and information but let’s save them for after our final song and return to personal sharing.”

Thank you. We can continue after the final song, as we often do.

Now Peggy Thompson will lead us in prayer.

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY Peggy Thompson**

Let’s pause to notice the prayers that arise in us now.  (Pause)  Our response will be:

**Abba, hear our prayer.**

That our hearts be awakened to the ever presence of God.

**For this we pray: Abba, hear our prayer.**

For all who have died, all who are injured, & all who must now bear the incredible wound

of a life without their beloved following the school shooting in Uvalde.

**For this we pray: Abba, hear our prayer.**

 As we lovingly remember all the men and women who have died in ANY war while serving in the United States Armed Forces, we pray for an end to ALL war.

**For this we pray: Abba, hear our prayer.**

Strengthen and inspire all women religious, especially the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.  Recreate them for your purpose in this place and time  to make your gospel a reality.

**For this we pray: Abba, hear our prayer.**

For all who are threatened, excluded, hated, and even killed by those with radicalized beliefs.

**For this we pray: Abba, hear our prayer.**

For candidates for public office, that they speak and act passionately for justice,

**For this we pray: Abba, hear our prayer.**

For the people of Ukraine and their oppressors,

**For this we pray: Abba, hear our prayer.**

In thanksgiving for this SWS community and the opportunity to pray together.

**For this we pray: Abba, 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.)

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.

**Peggy:** Ed Hutchisonwill now lead us in the Offertory.

**OFFERTORY Ed Hutchison**

Today, 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 Debbie Ballard**

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.

*[Pause.]*

**Debbie Ballard**: Norb Bufka will now lead us in the Our Father

**OUR FATHER Norb Bufka**

Now let us join our hearts in solidarity with all people who seek to love as Jesus loved,

in the words that Jesus gave us:

***All (muted):*** Our Father, Our Mother, who are here with us, holy is Your name.

Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our living 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 Lynn Bufka**

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

**L**et us now go forth in peace, love, and communion with

each other and our hungry world. Amen

**CLOSING SONG Reggie Ott**

**“They’ll Know We Are Christians” by Peter Scholtes**

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 may one day be restored:

**Refrain**: 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: **Refrain**

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 human’s dignity and save human’s pride: **Refrain**

**SOURCES:**

**National Catholic Reporter:**

Unifying Gift of Love

May 29, 2022, Seventh Sunday of Easter

by Carol J. Dempsey, O.P., PhD

**Jesus, Today**

**A Spirituality of Radical Freedom**

by Albert Nolan, O.P.

Albert Nolan, 1934-2020, was a Dominican priest from South Africa who played a significant role in the church struggle against apartheid.

"A beautiful book!  What Albert Nolan did 30 years ago with Jesus' passion for justice, he does again with Jesus' spirituality.  Writing simply and clear as a bell, he lays out the heart of the gospel in such a way that it lights up the world and ignites the heart of the reader.  Seekers as well as sturdy believers will find here deep wisdom, the fruit of the author's own mystic prophetic life.  A terrific sequel that will nourish spiritual life for years to come."

* Theologian and Sr. of St. Joseph Elizabeth A. Johnson, Ph.D.