**Solidarity with Sisters’ Communal Prayer**

**14th Sunday in Ordinary Time, July 3, 2022**

“Inch by inch, row by row…please bless these seeds [we] sow.” – Pete Seeger

**HELLOs and then Betty mutes everyone**

**WELCOME (Suzie De Quattro and Betty Thompson)**

Welcome, everyone!

* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?
* We had the joy of preparing today’s prayer.
* Thanks to our readers today: Sr. Vera Ruotolo, Gail DeGeorge, Reggie Ott, Jim De Quattro, Ann Jelen, Nancy Sushinsky, Charlotte Cook, Judith Galleazzi, and George and Alicia Urban.

**SETTLING IN (Sr. Vera Ruotolo)**

Let’s begin entering this week’s theme right now. Imagine that at this moment you are a seed that has been placed in warm, fertile soil. Feel how Earth cradles you… how light is like an invitation to you…. Feel how life is moving in you at this moment…. How your breath carries life deep into you…. Settle into the center of yourself…. Feel yourself awaiting the light that will bring you growth today.

*[Pause.]*

As we enjoy our opening song, become aware of the seeds that have been planted in you, and the seeds of life that you are planting.

# OPENING MUSIC - “Planting Seeds: A Song of Life” by nimo feat and daniel Nahmod

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AmqYcWjBmc>

**GREETING**  **(Gail DeGeorge)**

God’s beloved people, we welcome you with joy! May peace and grace be with you.

**All:** And with you, too. Thanks be to God!

**CALL TO WORSHIP and GATHERING PRAYER (Gail DeGeorge)**

Imagine yourself in the image we just saw – sitting with your back secure against a tall strong old tree. As on all our Sundays, we are here to feel the tall strong deep-rooted tree on which we confidently lean. We pray that we will help each other renew our roots, reach wider and higher, and spread good seeds of Gospel love. We also pray for guidance to help each other and for courage to face up to and get rid of the weeds that threaten to choke life for all. May it be so.

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME (Suzie De Quattro)**

This Sunday we will be reflecting together on planting seeds and cultivating growth. What **we** do. What **Earth** and the **Spirit** do, sometimes in wondrous visible ways and much more often hidden and underground. Each seed we plant is a hope that we are “creating space for the new to emerge.”

Every advance in the reign of God is a work of **God**. Our job is to cultivate the soil and plant good seeds. God brings the growth, and not on our schedule, even as we long for the reign of God now. Planting seeds of a living Gospel, we need the faith of Dr. Martin Luther King that: “The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.”

“Watch for the wonders God **is** working — hidden in plain sight. We can no more predict what the harvest will be than we can cause its growth. This is how it is with the [reign] of God.”

*[Pause]*

**Reggie Ott** will read from the 10th chapter of the Gospel of Luke, and then Jim De Quattro will offer questions for silent reflection. In Luke’s story, Jesus has begun the final journey to Jerusalem, and now sends seventy-two disciples to proclaim the reign of God. Seventy-two is the total number of nations in the world, according to Genesis 10.

**READING 1 (****Luke 10:1-12, 17-20) (Reggie Ott)**

Jesus appointed seventy-two others and sent them ahead in pairs to every town where they would stop on their way to Jerusalem. Jesus told the seventy-two,

“The harvest is plentiful but workers are few.

So ask the One whose harvest you are gathering to send more people to do this work.

“When you enter a house, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’

If a person of peace lives there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you.

Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for workers deserve their wages.

Do not move around from house to house.

“When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The reign of God has come near to you.’ But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, ‘Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet. as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: The reign of God has come near.’”

When they returned, the seventy-two were rejoicing, for they had seen the power of God working through them.

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS** *[Pause after each question.]* **(Jim De Quattro)**

Think of a time when you hoped to be welcomed and were not. How did you react?

How have your travels in life planted seeds of the reign of God in you?

How are you planting seeds of the reign of God?



**COMMUNAL SILENCE** (Slide 1, time, chime) **(Betty Thompson)**

Betty: Etty Hillesum was a mystic born in a Jewish family in the Netherlands in 1914. She wrote about her life and the wisdom she soaked up ~~as~~ she read Russian authors and Christian mystics. She also wrote about the persecutions of Jewish people in WWII. She died at Auschwitz at the age of twenty-nine. Ann Jelen will read an excerpt from her book, An Interrupted Life: The Diaries and Letters.

**READING 2: From Etty Hillsesum (Ann Jelen)**

“Slowly but surely I have been soaking Rilke up these last few months: the man, his work and his life. And that is probably the only right way with literature, with study, with people or with anything else: to let it all soak in, to let it all mature slowly inside you until it has become a part of yourself. That, too, is a growing process. **Everything is a growing process.** And in between, emotions and sensations that strike you like lightning. But still the most important thing is the organic process of growing.”

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS** *[Pause after each question.]* **(Jim De Quattro)**

Whose words or presence have you been soaking up lately? How have they helped you in the “organic process of growing”?

What emotions or sensations have “struck you like lightning” in recent times, and how did your growth change?



**COMMUNAL SILENCE** (Slide 2, time, chime) **(Betty Thompson)**

Betty:Now Nancy Sushinsky will read part of a reflection by Jesuit Volunteer Christine White titled “Planting Seeds of Justice.”

**READING 3: (Nancy Sushinsky)**

…[T]hink of **the way Jesus tends to discuss justice** in his teachings—

preferential to the poor;

giving without expecting something ‘fair’ in return;

something that is both present in our world today and something that is to come….

*[Long-ish pause.]*

There’s a reason that justice is often referred to as a seed— we’re called to “sow the seeds of justice” or “plant justice.” And just like our garden of little sprouts that we [have been] nursing this spring and summer, it’s not something we can expect to see results from or feel changes from overnight. If I check our sprouts excessively, waiting for progress, hovering, I’d be disappointed to see how small they still seem. But if I **concentrate on the process**, on watering and weeding, I’ll suddenly find myself surprised to see the progress. And so going forward in the rest of my year and beyond, I will focus on the process, focus on the small moments, and the big picture will emerge, bit by bit.

“Concentrate on the process.” That can be about seeds of justice, or seeds of relationship, or any other seeds you hope to nurture into life.

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS** *[Pause after each question.]* **(Jim De Quattro)**

How much do your choices express the view of justice that Christine sees in Jesus?

How do you stay focused on your own “watering and weeding” instead of constantly checking for progress?



**COMMUNAL SILENCE** (Slide 3, time, chime) **(Betty Thompson)**

Betty: Charlotte Cook will lead our sharing.

**SHARING (Charlotte Cook)**

We invite you to share the essence of what is emerging within you from our readings and silence. We welcome all voices, and know the wisdom of our community includes both words shared and silent listening.

As we speak, let’s focus on sharing what is happening inside of us. There will be a chance afterwards to offer each other sources or links.

Now let’s begin in silence as we gather our reflections. *[Long-ish pause]*

Who would like to begin our sharing? *[Let silence extend until someone is moved to speak.]*

(Sharing)

*[Silences are common and they can be fruitful. If there is extended silence after 15 minutes:]* “Is there anyone else who would like to share?”  *[Long pause]*

*[Stop by about 11:20.]*

Thank you.  We can continue talking after the final song. Now let’s take two slow, deep breaths to ready our hearts for the quiet of prayer together. *[Two slow, deep breaths.]*

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY (Judith Galleazzi)**

O God beyond all names, you work quietly within us and beside us to bring about your reign. We ask you to be with us in the hopes and needs we bring to you now.

Our response will be, “Spirit among us, hear our prayer.”

God within us, help us to cultivate the seeds you plant in us and through us. For this we pray. Spirit among us, hear our prayer.

God beside us, give comfort and vision to the exhausted leaders of women religious who are tending new seeds while they close motherhouses and bury their sisters. Let the joys and hopes of younger and older sisters reveal the future you want for them. For this we pray. Spirit among us, hear our prayer.

God among us, inspire us to tend the ideals of freedom, equality, and the common good that were planted in the founding of the United States. Renew our commitment to ending racism and exploitation of the vulnerable and of the Earth. For this we pray. Spirit among us, hear our prayer.

God of every day, abide with us and with those we love and those we serve. For this we pray. Spirit among us, 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.]*

For what else shall we pray? Please unmute yourself as you speak. Please end your petition with “for this we pray.”

(People speak.) …For this we pray. Spirit among us, hear our prayer.

Thank you.

Spirit of life and growth, we place all of our prayers, those spoken and those unspoken, into your loving care, and we entrust the outcome to you. Amen.

**OFFERTORY (Betty Thompson)**

God beyond borders and boundaries, tend in us the ideals of liberty and justice for all. Today we recommit to those ideals. As we celebrate the Fourth of July, let us name in silence one way we will advance those ideals this month. *[Long pause.]*

If you would like to speak a word to express your commitment, we can say our words all together, out loud, at the sound of the bell. *[Betty pauses, then chimes loud enough to somewhat obscure individual responses.]*

May it be so.

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION (George Urban)**

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.

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

Holy One, we entrust ourselves to you and to one another.

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

Let even our fragments be plenty to share.

Amen.

**THE PRAYER OF JESUS (Alicia Urban)**

Now let us join our hearts as if we could join our hands in harmony with our family throughout the world:

***All (muted):*** Our Father, Our Mother, you unite heaven and earth. Holy is 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 (Suzie De Quattro)**

Holy One,

We open our hearts to welcome your blessing.

At every moment you create space in us

where good seed can take root,

where the new can emerge,

where diversity can flourish,

where the Spirit freely works and surprises,

so that the young may harvest what we patiently tend

wrapped in an invisible blessing of your love. Amen.

Suzie: We will close with “The Garden Song.” Let the slight fuzziness of the recording be part of the music, maybe a reminder of good seeds that were being planted in your family or your life back when Pete Seeger recorded this in the 1970s.

**CLOSING SONG: “The Garden Song” by David Mallett**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u90qRE2F7CM> - start 0:43, audio only

Inch by inch, row by row,

Gonna make this [garden](https://www.definitions.net/definition/garden) grow,

Gonna [mulch](https://www.definitions.net/definition/mulch) it deep and low,

Gonna make it [fertile](https://www.definitions.net/definition/fertile) ground.

Inch by inch, row by row,

Please [bless](https://www.definitions.net/definition/bless) these [seeds](https://www.definitions.net/definition/seeds) I sow,

Please keep them safe below

'Til the rain [comes](https://www.definitions.net/definition/comes) tumbling down.

Pullin' [weeds](https://www.definitions.net/definition/weeds) and pickin' stones,

We are made of [dreams](https://www.definitions.net/definition/dreams) and bones.

Need a [place](https://www.definitions.net/definition/place) to call my own

'Cause the time is [close](https://www.definitions.net/definition/close) at hand.

Grain for grain, sun and rain,

Find my way in nature's chain,

Tune my body and my brain

To the [music](https://www.definitions.net/definition/music) of the land.

Inch by inch, row by row,

Gonna make this [garden](https://www.definitions.net/definition/garden) grow,

Gonna [mulch](https://www.definitions.net/definition/mulch) it deep and low,

Gonna make it [fertile](https://www.definitions.net/definition/fertile) ground.

Plant your rows [straight](https://www.definitions.net/definition/straight) and long,

Season with a [prayer](https://www.definitions.net/definition/prayer) and song.

Mother [Earth](https://www.definitions.net/definition/Earth) will make you strong

If you give her [loving](https://www.definitions.net/definition/loving) care.

Inch by inch, row by row,

Gonna make this [garden](https://www.definitions.net/definition/garden) grow,

Gonna [mulch](https://www.definitions.net/definition/mulch) it deep and low,

Gonna make it [fertile](https://www.definitions.net/definition/fertile) ground

.

Old crow [watching](https://www.definitions.net/definition/watching) from a tree.

He's got his [hungry](https://www.definitions.net/definition/hungry) eye on me.

In my [garden](https://www.definitions.net/definition/garden) I'm as free

As that [feathered](https://www.definitions.net/definition/feathered) thief up there.

Inch by inch, row by row,

Gonna make this [garden](https://www.definitions.net/definition/garden) grow,

Gonna [mulch](https://www.definitions.net/definition/mulch) it deep and low,

Gonna make it [fertile](https://www.definitions.net/definition/fertile) ground.

Inch by inch, row by row,

Please [bless](https://www.definitions.net/definition/bless) these [seeds](https://www.definitions.net/definition/seeds) I sow,

Please keep them safe below

'Til the rain [comes](https://www.definitions.net/definition/comes) tumbling down.

**RESOURCES**

Sister Mary McGlone – source of some Intro ideas: <https://www.ncronline.org/news/spirituality/scripture-life/pentecost-sunday>

Sister Mary McGlone quote in Intro: <https://www.ncronline.org/news/spirituality/scripture-life/eleventh-sunday-ordinary-time-how-it-kingdom-god>

The Gospel of Luke, primarily New International Version - <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2010&version=NIV>

The number 72 in Luke: <https://jashow.org/articles/is-it-70-or-72-disciples-in-luke-101/>

Etty Hillesum (1914-1943), An Interrupted Life: The Diaries, 1941-- 1943; and Letters from Westerbork, quoted at Monasteries of the Heart, <https://www.monasteriesoftheheart.org/monks-our-midst/etty-hillesum-growing-wisdom>

Christine White, 2017 (when she was a Jesuit Volunteer), “Planting Seeds of Justice” at <https://ignatiansolidarity.net/blog/2017/05/24/planting-seeds-of-justice/>

Image: “Preparing beds, hills, and rows” from Grown by You at <https://grownbyyou.com/planting/planting-in-beds/preparing-beds-hills-and-rows/>

Image: Sunflower soaking up sun – from <https://shesaidsunflower.com/do-sunflowers-follow-the-sun/>

Image of Sweet Peas, “Sprouts growing in the Wenatchee Jesuit volunteers’ garden” – part of Christine White’s reflection at <https://ignatiansolidarity.net/blog/2017/05/24/planting-seeds-of-justice/>