**Solidarity with Sisters’ Communal Prayer**

**October 30, 2022 –**

**Celebrating the Feast of All Saints**

*“Rejoice and Be Glad!””*

**HELLOs** and then Betty mutes everyone. **Reminder: bring bread & drink.**

**WELCOME ( Cecilia Estrada)**

Welcome, everyone!

* Introductions: Are there any people who haven’t been here before?
* Mary Dolmage and I have prepared today’s communal prayer. Rather than today’s readings for the 31st Sunday in Ordinary time, we have focused our prayer this morning towards the Feast of All Saints.
* Thanks to the people who will be reading and leading us in prayer today: Peg Duchesne, Paula Lake, Betty Thompson, George and Alicia Urban, Richard McGinnis, and Sister Jennie Lechtenberg, and Sister Jo’Ann De Quattro.
* If you’d like to read on future Sundays, please get in touch.

**SETTLING IN (Cecilia Estrada)**

Let your breath bring you into quiet so you can be attentive to the Spirit and to each other. 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 know the Spirit who never leaves us.

George Urban will gather us in prayer.

**GATHERING PRAYER / OPENING SONG – (George Urban)**

Beloved One, we gather today as a community of faith, summoned to follow the path of those who have gone before us. We give thanks and praise for all that they taught us by example.

How boundlessly you bless, how generously you give, how completely you love, how faithfully you provide, how tenderly you understand, how fully you forgive, how compassionately you heal.

Help us to be examples of your generosity, love, understanding, forgiveness, and compassion through the intercession of all the saints in heaven.

We have come to this table to hear your word with open hearts, trusting that the Spirit will be at work in us.  Blessed Be!

**The Litany of the Saints – (Cecilia Estrada)**

Now let us begin by joining in prayer through the intercession of the Saints as we present ourselves and our loved ones who have gone before us and for those who are with us now.

(Cecilia will share screen to present a PowerPoint of the Litany of the Saints in song.)

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME (Paula Lake)**

Today, we celebrate the Solemnity of All Saints. On this day the church celebrates all holy women and men who have lived for Christ. The saints are people from all walks of life, from every culture, from every time. While we know many of the saints and recognize them in the liturgical calendar, there are many others whose names have been forgotten. There are also many whose names we don’t know but are known to God. The saints are models of the beatitudes, women and men whom we can follow. They were imperfect followers of God, but who did all things through God. They continue to inspire the faithful by their lives, their witness, and their intercession on our behalf. In recognizing the saints, we might recognize ourselves, the future saints of the church, living the beatitudes with joy.

Peg Duchesne will now read from the Gospel of Matthew 5:1 – 12a, and Richard McGinnis will offer questions for our reflection.

**READING 1 (Peg Duchesne)**

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (short pause)

Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted. (short pause)

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land. (short pause)

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied. (short pause)

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. (short pause)

Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God. (short pause)

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. (short pause)

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (short pause)

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. (short pause)

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.”

**QUESTIONS 1** *(Pause after each question.)* **(Richard McGinnis)**

How do you see yourself as “Blessed”?

From where or from whom do you receive your blessings?

Which of these blessings resonates most strongly in you?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE**  *(Betty: time 2:00, chime)*

**REFLECTION 2**   **(Cecilia Estrada)**

One famous quote from Saint Teresa of Calcutta is, “Not all of us can do great things. But we can all do small things with great love.” We will now take a few minutes to reflect on its meaning as we watch a short video about doing small things with great love.

Betty shares screen: <https://youtu.be/QUGQ-fMgVSQ> (Play at 1.25 speed)

**QUESTIONS 2** *(Pause after each question.)* **(Richard McGinnis)**

How have you felt when you experienced doing small things for others, or having others doing small things for you?

God’s kingdom breaks in everywhere: on street corners and school yards, in sanctuaries and soup kitchens, among sinners and saints. God’s kingdom is among us. Where do you see it? How do you feel it?

How do you try to answer the video’s final question - What is it you desire most?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE**  *(Betty: time 2:00, chime)*

**READING 3:** **(Mary Dolmage)**

An adapted reading from “Catholic Women Preach” by Kerry Alys Robinson in 2018.

On this day and on November 1st and 2nd, we remember and celebrate those we have loved in this life who have been born into eternal life. And we are reminded that the invitation to sanctity is not for the unattainably pious or impossibly virtuous, but for all of us. All Saints Day is a joyful feast day and a reminder that we who are living are called to be in communion with those who have died.

The death of those we love can provide an aperture into the afterlife. What our faith teaches us about life and death would suggest that there is nothing generic about the afterlife, and our ongoing relationship with those who have died is not static. Examining and emulating their lives as well as the lives of those formally declared to be saints can make us more conscious of the community to which God calls us. It is striking to ponder the concrete realities of the lives of the saints. They are uniquely themselves, like us with deeply human idiosyncrasies, flawed, often struggling, searching for meaning, wanting goodness, yearning for a deeper faith and for God. One thing for certain, the saints we encounter on earth never think they are saints. I suspect this is because their orientation is outward, other-centered, not inward.

Today’s Gospel text is appropriate to pray on All Saints Day. You are part of the community of saints even and especially when you are poor in spirit, when you hunger and thirst for righteousness sake, when you are merciful, when you are a peacemaker, when you are persecuted. In fact, as incongruously as it might seem when in such a distressing state, Jesus tells us you are blessed.

Today pray for the grace to believe in the communion of saints to which you are called and to which you belong. Pray for the grace to cultivate with more intention those attributes of the saints that are common to many, or particular to some. Be grateful. Choose to be more loving. Lean into mercy. Persevere. Have the courage of heroic virtue. Be forgiving.

On October 14, 2018, Archbishop Oscar Romero and Pope Paul VI were canonized along with five others. Saint Oscar Romero said, “Let us not tire of preaching love. It is the force that will overcome the world.” And Saint Paul VI said, “If you want peace, work for justice.”

Rejoice and be grateful for the saints with whom we can be in relationship and from whom we can continue to learn.

And as you hold closely in your mind and heart those you love who have been born into eternal life, remember that Jesus promises: “Blessed are you who mourn, for you will be comforted.”

 **QUESTIONS 3** *(Pause after each question.)* **(Richard McGinnis)**

Which saint, or person who has gone before you, do you call on for intercession to God, for continued strength or guidance?

What draws you close to those who intercede on your behalf?

For whom or what do you mourn?

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

**Cecilia:**  Alicia Urban will now lead us in our sharing.

**SHARING (Alicia Urban)**

We know the wisdom of our community includes both words shared and silent listening. Now, if you’d like, we invite you to share the essence of what is emerging within you from our readings and silence. Let’s begin in silence as we gather our reflections. *[Longer pause]*

Who would like to start our sharing? Remember to unmute yourself to speak and mute yourself again afterwards.

[Sharing]

*[Long 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 20 after the hour.]*

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

Alicia: Now Betty Thompson will lead us in prayer.

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY (Betty Thompson)**

Now, we bring what is in our hearts to God. Our response will be**, Holy One guide us**.

Relying on the intercession of the saints, may we work for justice for all the poor, the oppressed, and the marginalized, we pray**...Holy One, guide us.**

Let us pray that God will open our eyes and hearts to serving each other. May our care for one another be a sign of the oneness we share in Jesus with all the saints, we pray**...Holy One, guide us.**

For the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and all committed sisters and brothers who joyfully, steadfastly, and unconditionally reach out to all in need as they extend their loving and healing touch, we pray**…Holy One, guide us.**

That seeking the wisdom of the saints, government leaders may put their own interests aside and make whatever sacrifices are necessary for the people they serve, we pray**…Holy One, guide us.**

That learning from the suffering of the saints, all who are ill may grow in their trust of the God who brings us consolation in all our trials, we pray…**Holy One, guide us.**

For what else shall we pray? Please unmute yourself to speak, and mute yourself afterwards.

(People offer prayers.) **We pray…Holy One, guide us**.

Thank you.

God of holiness, we thank you for the example of the saints. May their teaching and witness make us always faithful to you, in times of prosperity and in times of need. Blessed Be!

**OFFERTORY (George Urban)**

God of all generations, we offer our whole selves to you, all that we have and all that we are. Like your saints who have gone before us, and with us now, we pray that you will help us to be bold in our mission and in our witness. May we who have been given so much, give to others in need, support those who suffer or mourn, give peace to those in trouble, and love our neighbor as Jesus taught us. Blessed Be!

 (Pause)

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION (Sister Jennie Lechtenberg)**

As we prepare to share this meal, let us be conscious of the Holy One we call our Creator, Friend, Mother, Father, Sister, Brother, Redeemer, Provider, and Sustainer.

Mindful of those who tilled the soil, those who harvested its bounty, and those who toiled in the heat of sun and kitchen, we ask blessings on all of them; they are here with us in a special way.

We ask you, Holy One, to accept our gifts and transform them into plenty to share with our sisters and brothers in need. Accept our gratitude for your love and grace. Accept our efforts to give thanks for each other.

Bless and inspire us, as we struggle to realize our vision of a better world, a world of peace, a world where generosity and commitment makes seemingly the impossible, possible.

Bless us as we become eucharist for one another.

Give us and our world, we pray, plenty of knowledge and wisdom,

plenty of justice and compassion, plenty of bread and peace.

Blessed Be!

**SHARING BREAD (Sister Jennie Lechtenberg)**

Holding the bread and drink let us pray together, as we extend our hands outward and bless these gifts in thanksgiving for life. Open our eyes to see the hunger of others. Thank you for promising and giving us food for the journey.

We are one bread. We are one body.

Let us now eat the bread and drink, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by God’s love.

(five second pause)

Let us say: Blessed Be! So be it!

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To extend our communion, ­­­­Sister Jo’Ann De Quattro will lead us in the prayer of Jesus.

**THE PRAYER OF JESUS (Sister Jo’Ann De Quattro)**

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. Blessed Be!

**FINAL BLESSING** (**Betty Thompson**)

Holy One, you reveal yourself to us through the works of all the men and women we honor today as we celebrate the Feast of All Saints.

Blessings on those who seek You with all their hearts and respond to your call to holiness.

Blessings on those who work for justice, peace, and equality in our fractured world.

Blessings on each of us here today, as we aspire to be an example of your love and grace to those we encounter.

Blessed Be!

**CLOSING SONG:**

**Cecilia:** Now please join us in singing our closing song.

“Go Make a Difference” From “Catholic Women Preach” - Kerry Alys Robinson 2018 Betty: <https://youtu.be/Q2vYFN1YNIk> (Begin at 15 second mark.)

**RESOURCES**:

# Litany Of Saints: Warren Grayson Brown and Fr. Clarence Rivers Black Catholic Gospel Choir

Video – Make A Difference - You Tube