**Solidarity with Sisters’ Communal Prayer**

**June 18, 2023**

*“Glimpses of God keep us going.” Madeleine L’Engle*

**HELLOs** and then Zoom Host mutes everyone. **(Betty Thompson)**

**WELCOME (Lynn Bufka)**

Welcome, everyone!

* I am Lynn Bufka and I prepared our prayer for today.
* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?
* Thanks to the people who will be reading and leading us in prayer today: Charlotte Cook, Dan and Karen McCarthy, Kathy Linabery, Norbert Bufka, Richard McGinnis, Suzie and Jim De Quattro, and Betty Thompson.
* We are always looking for new readers and grateful for all readers. If you are available on June 25, contact Kathy and Bill Cavanaugh. For July 2, Alicia Urban. For July 9, Terri Butel or Peg Duchesne. You can leave a message in Chat or email the planners.

**SETTLING IN (Lynn Bufka)**

As we begin to settle into this time together let us spend a minute quietly looking at each other, appreciating the presence of each unique person here today. And if you can’t see everyone, appreciate our recent conversations and the unique voice of each person.  *(Take time to do that.)*

Let your body relax as your eyes move around the screen and you recall one another’s words.  Let your breath slow and deepen as we offer thanks to the Holy One for this time and for each person here.  Let us celebrate the amazing fact that God is in love with us.

Now let us enter into our prayer together by singing City of God.

**OPENING SONG** **- City of God** by Dan Schutte

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cnya9uh0oZo>] Fade to 2:01.

Awake from your slumber! Arise from your sleep!

A new day is dawning for all those who weep.

The people in darkness have seen a great light.

The God of our longing has conquered the night.

*Let us build the city of God.*

*May our tears be turned into dancing.*

*For the Lord, our light and our love, has turned the night into day!*

We are sons of the morning, we are daughters of day.

The one who has loved us has brightened our way.

The God of all kindness has called us to be

A light for his people to set their hearts free.

*Let us build the city of God.*

*May our tears be turned into dancing.*

*For the Lord, our light and our love, has turned the night into day!*

**GREETING/CALL TO WORSHIP/ GATHERING PRAYER (Kathy Linabery)**

Ordinary time is a season for us to recognize the sacraments around us and in us. Ordinary time is when we take the gifts of Pentecost and turn them into active graces in ordinary situations. We pray that we ourselves will be sacramental signs of God’s presence and sources of grace. May we encourage, inspire, and challenge each other to live lives of compassion. May it be so.

*[Pause]*

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME (Betty Thompson)**

Today’s theme is Compassion. We all think we know what that means, but what does God mean by compassion? And how are we to *live* compassion? The Gospel talks to us about compassion and both Sr. Cathy Murray and the Dalai Lama offer us additional perspectives on what compassion is. How do we live compassion in our day to day existence?

*[Pause]*

Now Karen McCarthy will read from the Gospel of Matthew. Jim De Quattro will offer questions that will lead us into silence.

**READING 1**  **(Karen McCarthy)**

At the sight of the crowds, Jesus’ heart was moved with pity for them
because they were troubled and abandoned,
like sheep without a shepherd.
Then Jesus said to his disciples,
“The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few;
so ask the overseer of the harvest
to send out laborers to bring in the crop.”

Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples
and gave them authority over unclean spirits,
to drive them out and to cure every disease and every illness….

Jesus sent out these twelve after instructing them thus:
“Do not go into Gentile territory or enter a Samaritan town.
Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
As you go, make this proclamation: ‘The reign of heaven is at hand.’
Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons. You received freely. Now freely give.”

*[Slight pause.]*

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS 1 (Jim De Quattro)**

What shepherding do you long for in your life?

What abundant harvest do you see that is ready and waiting for laborers? How then are you to respond?

Jesus sent out the apostles to minister with miraculous compassion. What are your own ways of compassionate ministry?

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

Betty: Now Charlotte Cook will read an edited excerpt from Sr. Cathy Murray’s homily for today.

**READING 2 (Charlotte Cook)**

As Jesus gazed at the crowd he saw a great harvest of what could be.

He saw what the people needed and he acted – he cured, he healed and he banished demons. He made the impossible possible.

He taught, he preached, he healed and he chased out.

In this gospel we see Jesus offer a different way of leading

as he calls 12 disciples to be his apostles.

… Jesus saw God continuing to act in the context of his times –

as God acts in the context of our times.

When we look at the world as it could be – what a great harvest !

Yet, what do we need in order to reap the fullness of that harvest?

… Jesus grants the apostles authority and credibility to engage in his mission

Authority that does not come from domination, from command and control,

but from compassion.

Compassion is the power driving Jesus into action,

Compassion shapes his plan.

Compassion is the ability to see others in their giftedness

and to share that ability to see others in their giftedness.

Jesus has that incredible gift of

*Looking at one another with hope…*

*[Slight pause]*

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS 2 (Jim De Quattro)**

What changes in how you act when you hear that you are to have “authority that comes from compassion”?

How did you, or how could you, develop a habit of “looking at one another with hope”?

What would it take for you to “look at the word as it could be” and see “a great harvest!” instead of the disasters that news media focus on?

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

Betty: Now Dan McCarthy will read from the Dalai Lama and The Art of Happiness.

**READING 3 (Dan McCarthy)**

“Compassion can roughly be defined in terms of a state of mind that is nonviolent, nonharming, and nonaggressive. It is a mental attitude based on the wish for others to be free of their suffering and is associated with a sense of commitment, responsibility, and respect towards the other…. Genuine compassion is based on the rationale that all human beings have an innate desire to be happy and overcome suffering, just like myself. And, just like myself, they have the natural right to fulfill this fundamental aspiration. On the basis of the recognition of this equality and commonality, you develop a sense of affinity and closeness with others. With this as a foundation, you can feel compassion regardless of whether you view the other person as a friend or an enemy…. Then you will generate love and compassion.”

*[Slight pause]*

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS 3 (Jim De Quattro)**

For whom do you find it hard to experience compassion? What might you do differently?

Think of about a time when you experienced compassion for someone you thought of as an enemy.

Talk with God about what happens inside you when you believe someone is seeking “to be happy and overcome suffering” at the expense of others. Speak honestly to God and listen carefully.

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

Lynn: Suzie DeQuattro will lead our sharing.

**SHARING (Suzie De Quattro)**

*(Note to the community: Because we have a song at offertory, the sharing might conclude after 20 minutes, even if it is not 11:20, as our prayer overall might be a bit longer today.)*

We invite you to share the essence that emerged in **your** heart this morning as you have reflected upon our reading and music. We welcome everyone who wants to speak. Each of you holds a spark that brightens what we see together. We welcome **everyone** who wants to speak. 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?

*[People share brief personal reflections.]*

*[If there is extended silence during the sharing:]* Is there anyone else who would like to share?  *[Silence is space for reflection.]*

*[Stop by 20 minutes after the hour.]*

Thank you to each of you who has spoken and who has listened. We can continue after the final song, as we often do.

Let us hold onto what the Holy One is saying in our reflections as we turn to God in prayer.

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY (Lynn Bufka)**

Let’s pause to notice the prayers that arise in us now. (Pause)

Our response will be: Compassionate One, hear our prayer.

God within us, may our lives shine with compassion. For this we pray. *Compassionate One, hear our prayer.*

God among us, be comfort, strength, and inspiration for women religious in these times of profound changes. For this we pray. *Compassionate One, hear our prayer.*

God beside us, help us look at others with hope and feel genuine compassion as we strive to alleviate suffering. For this we pray. *Compassionate One, hear our prayer.*

God beyond us, thank you for the gift of fathers and all those who are father figures. May they feel our love and gratitude for their presence in our lives and bless them especially today. For this we pray. *Compassionate One, hear our prayer.*

For what else shall we pray? Please end your prayer with “For this we pray. Compassionate One, hear our prayer.”

*[People share their personal prayers.]* Compassionate One, hear our prayer.

O You who love us more than we can imagine, we are grateful for this chance to give you our prayers, spoken and unspoken. We entrust the outcome to you. Amen.

**OFFERTORY (Richard McGinnis)**

As we offer God our time, treasure and talents, let us reflect on this song and what fields we are called to enter.

Come with Me into the Fields by Dan Schutte

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

The fields are high and summer’s days are few; green fields have turned to gold.

The time is here for the harvesting, for gathering home into barns.

*The harvest is plenty, laborers are few.*

*Come with me into the fields.*

*Your arms may grow weary; your shoes will wear thin.*

*Come with me into the fields.*

The seeds were sown by other hands than yours; nurtured and cared for they grew.

But those who have sown will not harvest them; the reaping will not be their care.

*The harvest is plenty, laborers are few.*

*Come with me into the fields.*

*Your arms may grow weary; your shoes will wear thin.*

*Come with me into the fields.*

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION (Richard McGinnis)**

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 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 wine,

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 know God within 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.

To extend our communion Norbert Bufka will lead us in the Prayer of Jesus.

**THE PRAYER OF JESUS (Norbert Bufka)**

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, who 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 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)**

May we wake each day with the mission to generate love in this world as humbly and faithfully as the sun generates light. (pause)

May we trust that we can lean on each other for comfort when the struggle is relentless. (pause)

May we know in the bones of our bones that we are not alone. (pause)

May this knowledge give us the courage to shine the light of compassion on everyone. No exceptions. (pause)

Let it be.

Now we will close as we Sing a New Church.

**CLOSING – Sing a New Church** by Deloris Dufner

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_WmI3WRMDI> -- 1.25 speed, fade at end

Summoned by the God who made us

Rich in our diversity,

Gathered in the name of Jesus

Richer still in unity.

*Let us bring the gifts that differ*

*And in splendid, varied ways*

*Sing a new Church into being*

*One in faith and love and praise.*

Bring the hopes of every nation,

Bring the art of every race,

Weave a song of peace and justice,

Let it sound through time and space.

*Let us bring the gifts that differ*

*And in splendid, varied ways*

*Sing a new Church into being*

*One in faith and love and praise.*

Draw together at one table
all the human family;
shape a circle ever wider
and a people ever free.

*Let us bring the gifts that differ*

*And in splendid, varied ways*

*Sing a new Church into being*

*One in faith and love and praise.*

**RESOURCES**

Reading 1: [Matthew 9:36—10:1, 5-8](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/matthew/9?36)

Reading 2: <https://www.catholicwomenpreach.org/preaching/06182023>

Image 2: <https://nbmediacoop.org/2020/08/09/hope-blooms-youth-driven-food-security-movement-flourishes-in-halifax/> (And a great story on youth addressing food insecurity in Halifax)

Reading 3: The Art of Happiness, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Howard C. Cutler. 1998.

Image 3: <https://www.skepticspath.org/podcast/28-what-is-compassion/> (And also more info on Buddhist ideas on compassion)

Final Blessing: <https://uucmthemes.wordpress.com/2017/04/28/readings-on-compassion/> (Rev. Deanna Vandiver)