**Solidarity with Sisters’ Communal Prayer**

**13th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**July 2, 2023**

*If anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones*

*because she is my disciple,*

*I tell you the truth, she will certainly not lose Christ’s reward.*



**HELLOs and then mute everyone.   (Suzie De Quattro and Betty Thompson)**

 (Note July 30 & Aug. 6 vacation. Then begin by saying: “Christ is risen, Alleluia!”)

**WELCOME**                                                                             **(George)**

Welcome, everyone as we celebrate our God, Abba, Christ, and Spirit!

* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?
* Thanks to the people who will be reading and leading us in prayer and song today: Kathy Heller, Richard McGinnis, Nancy Sushinsky, Maryann Dolan, Sr. Jaqueline Quinn, Cecilia Estrada, Mary Dolmage, Anne Regan, Sister Jo’Ann De Quattro, and us.
* Please remember to unmute yourself before speaking and mute again afterwards.
* If you are willing to read on July 9, please let Peg Duchesne know, and for July 16, Judy Sholes.

**SETTLING IN**                                                                                       **(Alicia)**

Take some time to be still and relax. … Be aware of the gift of your breathing. … Be aware of the depth of God’s love deep within your being. …Take a deep breath again to celebrate our being in God and with each other. ... Finally, breathe together and reflect on God’s gift that calls us to be here to celebrate this morning. Close your eyes and continue reflecting for a few more seconds.  (Pause)

 Now we will sing our opening song!

**OPENING SONG:**          “Servant Song” by Richard Gillard

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vsBCCz3Y7_w> at 1.5

Alicia:  Kathy Heller will read our Call to Worship

**CALL TO WORSHIP**             (**Kathy Heller)**



From a meditation from Sacred Space:

We are rarely asked for a cup of water. But the rewards promised by Jesus extend beyond individual almsgiving to those who work for others in a thousand hidden ways, for instance maintaining a city water system, or caring for public hygiene, as civil servants, plumbers, engineers, scientists, street-cleaners or parents of families. We live in a more complex society, but the same care and generosity are found in all walks of life, wherever people devote themselves to the service of others.

Thank you, Holy One, for the opportunities I have to serve others. Please continue to provide me with opportunities to serve others in whatever ways I can.

Richard McGinniswill gather us in prayer.

**GATHERING PRAYER**                                             **(Richard McGinnis)**

As we come together to celebrate today’s liturgy, let’s begin by pondering words from “Sacred Space” reflecting on today’s scripture:

“The Gospel of Jesus is not only about a way of life founded on love and mercy, but above all about the person of Jesus himself. Today he claims a special place in our lives, more important than our dearest ones. Being a disciple is not a marginal aspect of my life, it is central. I ask for the grace to be a real disciple of Jesus, capable of taking up my cross and following my Teacher.

“At the same time, Jesus assures us that even the smallest gesture of mercy to those in need will not go unnoticed. Let us reflect on the many such gestures that fill our lives.”

(Pause)

 Alicia will read the Introduction of the Theme.

**INTRODUCTION OF THE THEME**                       **(Alicia)**

Today we celebrate the 13th Sunday of ordinary time.  Obviously, it is no special feast but a theme of loyalty or faithfulness, caring and giving hospitality.  1 Kings shows Elisha’s faith and giftedness that comes from Yahweh and the gift to the hospitality Elisha has received. Like Abraham’s three visitors, Elisha is able to give God’s blessing to the hostess with the promise of a son in the next year.  Matthew reinforces this theme many times.  Today we will hear his words as well as an edited sermon on the message.

*[Pause.]*  (Alicia Urban) Now Nancy Sushinsky will read from 2 Kings 4. Then Sr. Jacqueline Quinn will offer reflective questions that will lead us into silence.

**READING 1**[2 Kgs 4:8-11, 14-16a](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/2kings/4?8) **(Nancy Sushinsky)**

One day Elisha came to Shunem,  
where there was a woman of influence, who urged him to dine with her.  
Afterward, whenever he passed by, he used to stop there to dine.  
So she said to her husband, "I know that Elisha is a holy man of God.  
Since he visits us often, let us arrange a little room on the roof  
and furnish it for him with a bed, table, chair, and lamp,  
so that when he comes to us he can stay there."  
Sometime later Elisha arrived and stayed in the room overnight.  
  
Later Elisha asked, "Can something be done for her?"  
His servant Gehazi answered, "Yes!  
She has no son, and her husband is getting on in years."  
Elisha said, "Call her."  
When the woman had been called and stood at the door,  
Elisha promised, "This time next year  
you will be fondling a baby son."

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS**  **(Sr. Jacqueline Quinn)**

(Choose the one that fits best for your reflection.)

1.      What might you offer to a loyal friend who has given you food and a special place to stay whenever you are in town? How might you pray for this hospitable person?

2.      How would you react in prayer to your neighbor who has giving you hospitality? Or what you say?

3.      What would you offer to a stranger who has lost home and/or family? How do you react to the family needing so much?  How would you pray?

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



**Betty:**  Now Maryann Dolan will read from Matthew

**READING 2** [Mt 10:37-42](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/matthew/10?37) **(Maryann Dolan)**

Jesus said to his apostles:  
"Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me,  
and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me;  
and whoever does not take up the cross  
and follow after me is not worthy of me.  
You who have found your life will lose it,

and you who lose your life for my sake will find it.

"Whoever receives you receives me,  
and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.  
Whoever receives a prophet because that person is a prophet  
will receive a prophet's reward,  
and whoever receives a righteous one  
because that person is righteous  
will receive a righteous one’s reward.  
And whoever gives only a cup of cold water  
to one of these little ones to drink  
because the little one is a disciple—  
amen, I say to you, the child will surely not lose the reward."

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS**                                      **(Sr.** **Jacqueline Quinn)**

(Choose the one that fits best for your reflection.)

1.      What is your first reaction when hearing this gospel reading? What might you say to the person next to you? Or how would you pray?

2.      In reflection how do you respond to: “Whoever receives you receives me,  
and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me”?

3.      How would you offer a prayer in response to Matthew, who gives us this mandate?



**COMMUNAL SILENCE**                       **(Betty:**Share slide 2.)

Betty:  George Urban will read the 3rd reading.

**READING 3:                                  (George Urban)**

**An edited sermon:**  
Dying To Live   **Contributed by**[Michael Deutsch](https://www.sermoncentral.com/contributors/michael-deutsch-profile-45921)**on Mar 10, 2010**

**Summary:** We must die to ourselves in order to be fully alive in Christ:  Matthew 10:37-42

I remember watching the western, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, in which two outlaws find themselves being chased by an angry posse. It was a fun movie, there was silliness, gunfights, a little romance and of course, for women, it starred Robert Redford and Paul Newman, in their prime.

Do you remember the scene in which their luck seems to have run out? They escaped to a high cliff that overlooked a raging river. Butch suggested they jump into the river, but Sundance refused. Finally, as the posse closes in for the kill, Butch asks Sundance why doesn’t he want to jump. Sundance admits he can’t swim. Butch laughed and said, “it doesn’t matter, the fall will probably kill you anyway!”

Like Butch and Sundance, we face two options, we can also jump off the cliff or we can surrender. And both lead to death while we’re still alive. Yet, they are very different. Jumping means we reject Christ and allow our soul to die, which means we live a life without the power and strength, the hope and grace, the love and future Christ offers us. The other option is to follow or surrender to Christ, which calls for us to die to ourselves. It’s through this strange paradox of dying to ourselves that Jesus says we truly find life, the greatest life possible.

The first step in dying in order to live is to maximize Christ in your life. If you have a computer, you’re probably familiar with the features of maximizing or minimizing the screen. When you maximize a window on your computer screen, that image fills the screen, while the other open windows or images are hidden.

When we maximize something, we make it bigger. In our world today, one of the big attractions at fast food restaurants is to super-size or maximize our meal. You see, you order a hamburger, especially off the dollar menu and what you get is nothing more than a simple hamburger at the normal size.

But we live in a world in which bigger is believed to be better, so we can super-size it and WALA we end up with a hamburger!

In today’s passage, Jesus makes it perfectly clear that we are to follow our God and be willing to change our lives. Christ becomes the focus and purpose of our lives and as the writer of Hebrews tells us we must fix our eyes upon Jesus (Heb. 12:2) and set our hearts and minds on Jesus (Col. 3:1-2). Jesus is our great and glorious Savior who is worthy of worship and worthy of our best attention and affection. We must maximize Christ, not anything else.

**Summary:** We must die to ourselves in order to be fully alive in Christ.

This may sound like we just have to deny ourselves all of the pleasures of the world. But following Christ is not a passive lifestyle, nor is it just a sanctified resignation. We are not just eliminating desires; you see, when we follow Christ, we should be igniting spiritual devotion. Spiritual surrender is not resignation. Christ-like surrender shouldn’t be confused with just quitting bad stuff, instead it’s allowing God to transform your life, to change your life so that you have new desires, new mercy, new life, new hope, new strength and power, and a new heart and soul.

**REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS                                  (Sr. Jacqueline Quinn)**

(Choose the one that fits best for your reflection.)

1.       How do you react to dying to self? How do you feel about your response?

2.      What does dying to self, or giving of self, mean in your life?  How might you pray for this ability, this gift?

3.     The pastor says: It’s through this strange paradox of dying toourselves that Jesus says we truly find life, the greatest life possible.  How could you pursue this gift? How do you feel in your heart?



**COMMUNAL SILENCE**                            **(Betty:**Share slide.)

Betty:  Now Cecilia Estrada will lead us in our sharing.

**SHARING**       **(Cecilia Estrada)**

We invite you to **briefly** share what emerged in **your** heart this morning as you listened and as you reflected on these readings that help us to glimpse the many ways God is among us.  We welcome new voices, and we also know that the wisdom of this community includes both words shared and silent listening.  And let’s leave a bridge of silence between speakers.

We begin in silence as we gather our reflections.  *[Long pause.]*

Please unmute yourself to speak, and mute again afterwards.

Who would like to begin?

 ……….

 Ask when closer to the time limit, “Would anyone else like to share.”

(Let sharing continue for about a total of 20 minutes or until 20 after the hour.)

Thank you for your insights and thoughts.  We must stop now, but we can continue after the final song, as we often do.

Now let us pray together our intensions with Mary Dolmage

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY**                                 **(Mary Dolmage)**

[Long pause.]

**Our response is:** Jesus, the Christ, hear our prayer.

Let us hold those living in war ravaged homelands or natural disasters.   May there be peace and reconstruction as well as adequate food and shelter in all places of our suffering world.

Let us pray: Jesus, the Christ, hear our prayer.

Let us remember those who are in the midst of suffering:  illness, hunger, poverty, homelessness, alienation, isolation, persecution, loss of everything.

Let us pray:  Jesus, the Christ, hear our prayer.

Let us remember all religious and the leadership of Catholic Sisters who continue to speak for peace and justice, and acceptance of all God’s people.

Let us pray: Jesus, the Christ, hear our prayer.

Let us remember those who have given over their lives to Christ and who reach out to all those in need.

Let us pray:  Jesus, the Christ, hear our prayer.

For what else shall we pray?  (Please unmute and then mute yourself after your intention.)

(People offer prayers, and we respond: Jesus, the Christ, hear our prayer.)

End with: Thank you.

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION**                                      **(Anne Regan)**

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

Let even our fragments be plenty to share.

Amen.

**OUR FATHER, OUR MOTHER**   **(Sr. Jo’Ann DeQuattro)**

Now let us join our hearts with all who seek the coming of God, using the words that Jesus gave us written by the Polynesian and Māori 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. Amen.

**FINAL BLESSING**                  **(Alicia)**

Top of Form

**Numbers 6:24-26 (edited)**

“‘God bless us and keep us;  
God, make our faces shine on us,  
    and be gracious to us;  
God, turn your face toward us,  
    and give us peace.”

Bottom of Form

**FINAL SONG:**  
“Whatever you do to the Least of My people, That you do unto Me.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_125Hgnf3uk> v (play at 1.25)

**RESOURCES**

USCCB: edited readings for July 2, 2023

“The Servant Song:

[Sacred Space  Your daily prayer online: Matthew 10:37](https://www.sacredspace.ie/)

Sermon on the gospel:   
Dying To Live:  **Contributed by**[Michael Deutsch](https://www.sermoncentral.com/contributors/michael-deutsch-profile-45921)**on Mar 10, 2010**

"Whatever you do to the Least of My people, That you do unto Me."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_125Hgnf3uk>