

**Solidarity with Sisters' Communal Reflection and Prayer**  
**On the Fourth Sunday of Lent 2020**  
**In this Time of Coronavirus**

**TECHNICAL WELCOME (Betty) –**

I'm Betty Thompson, and, for Solidarity with Sisters, I'm really happy to welcome you here today.

Mention size of group for those joining on phone.

Mention Gallery View for those on Zoom.

Does everyone know how to mute themselves, on phone or Zoom?

Now let's put technical things aside and just be here together.

**INTRODUCTION (Suzie)**

I'm Suzie De Quattro. Betty and I and the readers are members of Solidarity with Sisters. We are a group of lay women and men who began meeting in 2012 with the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. Two things have stood out during the years we have been in solidarity with the sisters and LCWR. The first is their commitment to contemplative action in their decision making, governance, prayer and communal life. And the second is their work with those on the margins of society.

Throughout this time of prayer today, we will pause together in sacred silence. So let's get settled as we prepare to begin. Sit comfortably, notice your breath as it goes in and out. Become aware of divine presence in you and around you.

And so we begin with 3 deep breaths. One to be here... one to be together... and one to create space for the Holy Spirit to act in us.

**CALL TO WORSHIP (Suzie)**

We come together today because it is with each other that we experience ourselves as people of God and body of Christ. We gather to remember that God

is in love with us. Jesus told us that wherever two or three are gathered in his name, he is right here in the midst of us. We pray that our time together this morning strengthens us and opens us to whatever God wants to be born in us.

### **GATHERING PRAYER (Betty)**

O God who creates and who gives breath,  
be with us now as we come to you  
with the great longings of our world  
and of our selves.

We come together  
trusting that the Spirit will be at work in us  
during this time of coronavirus,  
and during this Lenten season of conversion  
for transformation.

Help us to let go and to let come.  
Help us to live the questions  
and to move with you, in you, and toward you,  
ever open to what is waiting to be born in us.

Let's take a minute of silence to welcome God's presence.

### **SILENCE**

### **READINGS**

**Suzie:** Next we will listen to the words of others in a poem, in scripture, and in a reflection on the Gospel. After each reading, you will have time to reflect on what you have heard.

Richard McGinnis will read from the poem LOCKDOWN by Fr. Richard Hendricks.

### **Reading 1: LOCKDOWN (Richard)**

They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise

you can hear the birds again.  
They say that after just a few weeks of quiet  
the sky is no longer thick with fumes  
but blue and grey and clear.  
They say that in the streets of Assisi  
people are singing to each other  
across the empty squares....  
All over the world people are waking up to a new reality –  
to how big we really are.  
to how little control we really have.  
to what really matters.  
to Love.  
So we pray and we remember that  
yes there is fear.  
But there does not have to be hate.  
Yes there is isolation.  
But there does not have to be loneliness.  
Yes there is panic buying.  
But there does not have to be meanness.  
Yes there is sickness.  
But there does not have to be disease of the soul.  
Yes there is even death.  
But there can always be a rebirth of love.  
Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.  
Today, breathe.  
Today, sing.

### **Silence (Suzie)**

Before the silence: Let us take a little time to notice what feels true to you in that poem.

Ending the silence: Mary Ott will read from the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of Ephesians.

## **Reading: Ephesians (Mary)**

Brothers and sisters:  
You were once darkness,  
but now you are light in the Lord.  
Live as children of light,  
for light produces every kind of goodness  
and righteousness and truth.  
Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.  
...  
For everything that becomes visible is light.  
Therefore, it says:

“Awake, O sleeper,  
and arise from the dead,  
and Christ will give you light.”

## **Silence (Suzie)**

Before the silence:  
Let us take a little time to reflect on how we are the light of the world in the  
particular circumstances of our lives.

Ending the silence:  
Ann Jelen will read from Psalm 23.

## **Reading: Psalm 23 (Ann)**

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
You make me to lie down in green pastures: You lead me beside the still waters.  
You restore my soul: You lead me in the paths of righteousness for your name's  
sake.  
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:  
for you are with me; your rod and staff comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies: you anoint my head with oil; my cup runneth over.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

### **Silence (Suzie)**

Before the silence –  
Let us take a little time to name the one or two words from the psalm that really touch your center at this moment.

Ending the silence –  
Bob Gallagher will read from the Gospel of John.

### **Reading: The Gospel of John (Bob)**

As Jesus passed by he saw a man blind from birth.  
He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva,  
and smeared the clay on his eyes,  
and said to him,  
“Go wash in the Pool of Siloam” — which means Sent —.  
So he went and washed, and came back able to see.

His neighbors and those who had seen him earlier as a beggar said,  
“Isn’t this the one who used to sit and beg?”  
Some said, “It is, “  
but others said, “No, he just looks like him.”  
He said, “I am.”

They brought the one who was once blind to the Pharisees.  
Some of the Pharisees said,  
“What do you have to say about him,  
since he opened your eyes?”  
He said, “He is a prophet.”

They answered and said to him,  
“You were born totally in sin,  
and are you trying to teach us?”  
Then they threw him out.

When Jesus heard that they had thrown him out,  
he found him and said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”  
He answered and said,  
“Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?”  
Jesus said to him,  
“You have seen him, and  
the one speaking with you is he.”  
He said,  
“I do believe, Lord,” and he worshiped him.

### **SILENCE (Suzie)**

Before the silence –

Let us take a little time as we hold the question of how our own eyes are to be made new in this time.

After the silence –

Stu Sklamm will read a reflection from Sr. Mary McGlone of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet.

### **Reading: REFLECTION from Sr. Mary M. McGlone (Stu)**

In this third week of our Lenten pilgrimage, we're invited to put ourselves in the sandals of the man born blind. The disciples saw him as the object of a theological discussion: something was obviously wrong, and their response was to figure out who to blame. Was it the guy or his parents? Now, how could a child born blind be any guiltier than the others who were born that day? Thus, it must have been the parents! Voila! Problem solved!

Jesus would have none of that. Not one to theorize about other people's poverty, he responded to the man's need. Molding the matter out of which God had created the Earth, he covered the man's useless eyes.

In John's story, the blind man didn't ask Jesus for anything. Jesus initiated a relationship with him and smeared his eyes with a mixture of clay and saliva: the earth and his own essence. That combination of heaven and earth held healing power.

When people interrogated the once-blind man about what happened, he said, "The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes." The Greek word for anointed is *epichrio*; it comes from the same root as the words *chrism* and *Christ*. We might say that the man born blind said that Jesus Christified his eyes.

This leads us into the key question of this week's Gospel: what would it mean to allow our eyes to be Christified? Jesus of Nazareth is no longer walking through our streets. But we do believe in his promise to remain with us until the end of time. How might he be reaching out to us to anoint our eyes, to Christify our vision?

In the final scene, Jesus again approached the man who saw. Now, Jesus asked him if he believed. The man admitted that he didn't yet know enough — he didn't understand who had healed him. When Jesus revealed himself, the man saw him for who he was and believed.

Jesus summarized the incident warning that we should never be too sure that we see clearly. No matter how great or insightful our faith, allowing our vision to be Christified is a lifelong process. The healed man might warn us that such a vision can lead to trouble — but he would also certainly tell us that is worth the price.

## **Silence (Suzie)**

Before the silence —

Let us sit in silence for a few minutes reflecting on what we have heard in the readings and reflection. After the silence I will invite you (if you'd like) to offer a word or two of what is arising in you at this moment.

### **SHARING (Suzie)**

I invite you to share your one or two words from your reflection. If you would like to speak, you will need to unmute yourself on your phone or in Zoom. After you speak, please mute yourself again. It will be a lot like at a dinner table -- if more than one person speaks at once, some will need to wait.

(Sharing)

Thank you. Thank you for being you. Thank you for coming as you are. May we be transformed together in Christ. Amen.

### **INTENTION (Betty)**

Let us pray together now.  
As we begin, let's take a deep breath  
inviting Jesus us to touch us, too,  
so that we may see with Christified eyes.  
Let's take a deep breath  
with the intention of seeing all that is  
with God's eyes,  
which are always and only full of love,  
so that we can hold the world and ourselves in love.

Now Anne Regan and Bill Fanelli will lead us in prayer.  
If your phone or computer is muted, you can respond aloud:  
God of healing and hope, hear our prayer.

### **PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL (Anne and Bill)**

Loving God, we offer to you ourselves and our sharing. Work in us to transform us. Make us truly your Body. For this we pray. God of healing and hope, hear our prayer.

We join our own prayer with Catholic sisters worldwide who are praying today in solidarity with those directly impacted by the coronavirus crisis. Through the mystery of your divine presence, may this action of solidarity contribute in some way to an increase in healing, compassion, and love throughout the planet. For this we pray. God of healing and hope, hear our prayer.

With the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, we are heartbroken by the myriad ways our one human family and Earth, our common home, suffer from disconnection, indifference, violence, and fear. You love all of creation into being. We pray that we will create communion and examine the root causes of the tragedies and injustices of our time, looking especially at how these roots causes intersect. For this we pray. God of healing and hope, hear our prayer.

For people who are in fear in these unsettled times, we pray. God of healing and hope, hear our prayer.

For our families and those who are dear to us, we pray. God of healing and hope, hear our prayer.

For the strength and wisdom we individually and collectively need for this time, we pray. God of healing and hope, hear our prayer.

For leaders nearby and worldwide to act with wisdom and with care for the vulnerable, we pray. God of healing and hope, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for our own intentions, wishing we could share them out loud with each other. God of healing and hope, hear our prayer.

Betty: We place all of our prayers, those spoken and those unspoken, into your loving care, and we entrust the outcome to you. As we do, we use the words of Sister Sharlet Wagner. We thank you, God, that "It is not ours to see the future.

Our task is not to create a plan for the new to emerge. It is to create a space for the new to emerge. For the young. For the growing diversities. A space where the Holy Spirit is free to work. If we can do this, the future will emerge. And it will be good.” Amen.

### **CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION (Betty)**

Today we are not able to share in the physical breaking of bread and sharing of the cup.

But let's remember that  
on the night before he died  
the first thing Jesus did  
was to give thanks.  
The word Eucharist  
is a Greek word for thanksgiving.  
So let us pause  
and know that God is among us  
and give thanks.

And then Jesus, who was having dinner with his friends,  
looked at what was in front of him,  
the bread and the cup,  
And he blessed it.  
So let us, too,  
look at what is front and center in our lives  
and bless it.  
Let us pause  
to invite God right now  
into what is front and center in our lives  
and know that God will indeed  
enter our space – and bless it.

We thank God that through Christ we share in divine life.  
We invite God's Spirit to fill us with blessing.

So let us ourselves be bread for the world,  
from our own newly cloistered places.  
O gracious Mystery that we name God,  
may we create space within ourselves  
for your creativity and your peace,  
so that we can share with the world  
your abundant and transforming love.

Perhaps every time we break bread this week,  
every time we eat or drink,  
we can remember our communion with God and with each other.  
Every time we take in food,  
we can recognize that this is communion with all creation  
as other living beings become part of our own bodies.

Let us pause to take in the gift of God's life in us and among us.

### **OUR FATHER (Betty)**

Now let's pray in harmony with all Christians throughout the world in the words  
that Jesus taught us. Our Father...  
... for the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

As we close this time together,  
we thank God for bringing us together across distance.  
In the hope that we are creating space in ourselves  
where the Spirit is free to act, let's join in prayer.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your  
love. Send forth your spirit and we shall be created. And you shall renew the  
face of the earth. Amen.

Let us now go forth in peace:  
in communion with each other  
and offering communion to a hungry world. Amen.