**Solidarity with Sisters Communal Prayer for Advent 2020**

**Dec. 6, 2020 – Second Sunday of Advent**

*“When your star rises deep within,
Trust yourself to its leading.
You will have the light for first steps.”*

(Sister Raphael Considine in her poem “[Trasna](https://jpbennett.tumblr.com/post/62495573715/trasna-by-raphael-considine-pbvm)”)

**CHECK-IN (Betty Thompson)**

I’m Betty Thompson and I welcome you here on behalf of Solidarity with Sisters.

* For anyone who wasn’t there last week, we want to remind you that we’ll refrain from using chat from Settling In to the Final Blessing.  We hope you will do the same.  We’ll always be delighted to chat in every form before and after our prayer time.
* **I will now mute everybody.**  Unmute to speak.
* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?
* As we move toward prayer, let’s pray today with special awareness of all who have suffered loss this week. We especially ask God to welcome Joe Bufka, uncle of Lynn and older brother of Norb; Adalberto Claros, friend of Mary Ott; and Marion Gotwalt, aunt of Suzie De Quattro.

**WELCOME (Suzie De Quattro)**

Welcome, everyone!

* Thanks to Alicia and George Urban for preparing today’s communal prayer.  With Advent music, it may last a little longer than usual.  And we want you to know we’re planning for Christmas Eve 4 PM - and for the following Sunday, a simple service of music and reading and sharing.
* Thanks to George for lighting the Advent candles today.
* Thanks to Stu Sklamm, Linda Donaldson, Reggie Ott, for our music.
* Thanks to the people who will be reading and leading us in prayer today: Anne Regan, Ann Jelen, Kevin Lynch, Sister Marie McCarthy, Peg Duchesne – whose birthday is tomorrow!, Tim and Mia Brown, Judy Sholes, Pat and Greg Campbell, and Gail DeGeorge.
* When Kevin offers questions for your reflection, feel free to choose only one, so that you can go deeper.

Now we continue our Advent journey together, knowing that as the poem Trasna says,

*“When your star rises deep within, Trust yourself to its leading.
You will have the light for first steps.”*

**OPENING AND LIGHTING OF ADVENT WREATH  (Stu Sklamm and Linda Donaldson, and Urbans)**

Stu: Holy God, swords to ploughs shall be!

Linda: (and all, muted): O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

Stu: Holy God, greed to grace shall be!

Linda (and all, muted): O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

Stu: Holy God, strife to peace shall be!

Linda (and all, muted): O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

Stu: Holy God, earth made whole shall be!

Linda (and all, muted): O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

***Betty:*** *Spotlight Urbans.*

*Next* ***George*** *and* ***Alicia*** *light two Advent candles on Zoom.  As they light the candles,*

*one**says the following words – and everyone lights their own candle.*

**George:** Please join us as in lighting two Advent candles.  (Light candles.)

Alicia: We pray:

God of light, shine into the corners we hide from you.  Bring light into our world.

**Linda** (and all, muted): Rejoice! Rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

**SETTLING IN                                                                         (Alicia Urban)**

Today we will prepare ourselves while listening to the oboe theme from Mission.  Settle into a comfortable position.  While listening let go of any tightness in your body and let your muscles loosen.  Try to put aside anything that distracts you.  As you sink into the music, let tensions leave you.  Take a couple of deep breaths and then breathe gently. Feel God’s love flowing into you as you are called to continue celebrating our liturgy.

**Music only:**  **(Betty)**

[Gabriel’s Oboe](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Gvrp20_WXM) (Ennio Morricone) (Listening only **Oboe theme from “Mission”** for about **1** min.)

(Pause.)

**OPENING and GREETING                                                          (George Urban)**

Rejoice!  The Spirit of God is alive among us as we wait with hope during this Advent Season.

**Response:**  All God’s people reply:  Amen!  Alleluia!

**CALL TO WORSHIP                                                                      (George Urban)**

We come together today because it is with each other that we experience ourselves as the people of God and the body of Christ.  We have confidence that God cares for us, loves us and is with us in the person of Christ our Lord.  Let us be confident that God, whose Kingdom is here now and not yet complete, is with us.  Our path may at times be cumbersome, but our promise is in the coming of Jesus.  Come, oh, come Emmanuel.

And now Alicia Urban will gather us in prayer and introduce the theme.

**GATHERING PRAYER** and **INTRODUCTION TO THEME      (Alicia Urban)**

Like the early Christians, we find ourselves aware of the darkness, fearing chaos, and searching for guideposts we can trust.  At times, it is difficult to imagine how we are to participate in the coming about of transcendent love; how we can find the embrace of our God in trying to control our feelings of distress and fear.  Even ancient peoples had rituals because they feared the sun would not come back and give them life-giving food.

Today’s readings invite us to consider that we are held closely by Our Triune God; how we can feel Emmanuel and have hope.

*(Slight pause)*

Our first reading, like many during Advent, is from Isaiah.  Let us celebrate Isaiah’s oracle of poetic words using the Messiah’s opening: “Comfort Me.”  The introductory singing will be followed by the reading.  Next, we will sing the Responsorial, led by Reggie. Please sing the response even though muted.  The gospel will end the readings including reflections.

Mark, who gives us the basis of the two other synoptic gospels, refers to Isaiah.  In fact, he quotes this prophet who was calling out to his people who were in exile in Babylon.  He paints the God of Israel being with them even in this foreign land.  Their God, like centuries before, is a comforter and caretaker as in the desert.

**Screen-share** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=83jCTO8N0K4>**(Betty)**

# **Comfort ye, Every Valley (Handel's Messiah) Gramophone Chorus - Ebenezer ANTWI**

# **“Comfort Ye” -- from beginning to “…that her iniquity is pardoned” = 2:50**

**FIRST READING  (Anne Regan)**

 **Slide 1 –** Start duringreading **(Betty)**

Comfort, give comfort to my people,
says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her
that her service is at an end,
her guilt is expiated.

A voice cries out:
In the desert prepare the way of the LORD!
Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God!
Every valley shall be filled in,
every mountain and hill shall be made low;
the rugged land shall be made a plain,
the rough country, a broad valley.
Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together;
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

Go up on to a high mountain,
Zion, herald of glad tidings;
cry out at the top of your voice,
Jerusalem, herald of good news!
Fear not to cry out
and say to the cities of Judah:Here is your God!
Here comes with power
the Lord GOD.

Like a shepherd he feeds his flock;
in his arms he gathers the lambs,
carrying them in his bosom,
and leading the ewes with care. **(Betty – stop slide 1)**

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS 1 (Kevin Lynch)**

Just rest into a time you have felt being gathered into God's arms or been carried close to Jesus’ bosom.

How do you feel the glory of the LORD has been shown or expressed to you?

Hear and feel God speaking to YOU in Isaiah’s words:   Comfort, I give comfort to you.  I speak tenderly to you and proclaim that your guilt is expiated.

**SILENCE**(Slide 2, time 2 minutes, chime, stop slide 2)                            **(Betty)**

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**GOSPEL**[**MK 1:1-8**](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/mark/1?1)**(Ann Jelen)** **Start slide 3 at about 4th line (Betty)**

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

As it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you;

he will prepare your way.

A voice of one crying out in the desert:

“Prepare the way of the Lord,

Make straight his paths.”

John the Baptist appeared in the desert

proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

People of the whole Judean countryside

and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem
were going out to him
and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River
as they acknowledged their sins.

And this is what he proclaimed:

“One mightier than I is coming after me.

I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals.

I have baptized you with water;

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

*(Slight pause)* **(Stop Slide 3 – Betty)**

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS              (Kevin Lynch)**

Reflect on your highway of life and see your road with whatever has happened, e.g. hills,  valleys, potholes, bridges, blockades, large or small rocks, etc.

How would you respond if in your heart you heard God say to you: Prepare the way of the Lord? How would God be calling you to act? How do you respond?

**SILENCE**(Slide 4, time 2 minutes, chime, stop slide)                            **(Betty)**

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**SHARING             (Peg Duchesne)**

We invite you to briefly share what emerged in your heart this morning as you listened and as you reflected on these readings.  That helps 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.

As you share your feelings, please use "I” or “me".  And let us leave a short bit of silence between speakers.   A bridge of silence allows us to take in what was just said and gives others the chance to gather their feelings to share.

So let’s begin in silence as we gather our reflections. [Pause.]

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

[Sharing]

Is there anyone else who would like to share?  [Pause.]

And/or:  11:25 PM – I am sorry to say that we will have to bring our spoken sharing to an end.

Thank you.  Now Greg and Pat Campbell will lead us in community prayer.

**COMMUNITY PRAYERS  (Linda Donaldson, Greg and Pat Campbell) (Betty:  (**Slide 5**)**

**Greg:** Let us pause and gather the prayers that are rising in us, as we wait on the Lord.  (Pause.)

**Betty:**  Start slide 5 – art © Jan Richardson, used with permission.



**Linda:** Contemplative musical meditation:  Wait on the Lord whose day is near.  Wait on the Lord.  Keep watch, take heart.  (Repeat less than 45-50 seconds.)

 **(Betty:** Stop Slide 5.**)**

**Greg:** Now let us pray.

**Pat (sung):**  Come quickly, Lord, in mercy, come.

**Greg:**  God within us, keep us alert to notice and to nurture your presence in us and in our world.  For this we pray.

**Pat** (and all, muted):  Come quickly, Lord, in mercy, come.

**Greg:**  God among us, thank you for those who commit their lives topeople who are poor, marginalized, or unseen.  May we stand with them in solidarity with the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.  For this we pray.

**Pat** (and all, muted):  Come quickly, Lord, in mercy, come.

**Greg:**  God beyond us, shine in our darkness and make us your light.  For this we pray.

**Pat** (and all, muted):  Come quickly, Lord, in mercy, come.

**Greg:**  For what else shall we pray?

(Shared prayers)

**Response to each (sung by Greg, and by all, muted):**  Come quickly, Lord, in mercy come.

When prayers become less frequent – **Greg:**  Would anyone else like to offer a prayer? (Pause about 10 sec.)

**Greg:**  Thank you.  O God, we will do all we can to make our prayers real, and we entrust the outcome to you.  Amen.

 **OFFERTORY   (Mia or Tim Brown, Marie McCarthy)**

**Mia or Tim:**  During the four weeks of Advent, we are inviting a different person each week to share their Advent tradition.  Today Sister Marie McCarthy will share hers.

**Marie:** [1-2 minutes – the tradition and its value as I prepare for Christmas.]

**Mia or Tim:**  Let us now take time to name for ourselves an action we will do this week in gratitude for all that we have received from God. [Pause.]

In thanksgiving for the presence and power of Jesus Christ, and in unity with the Holy Spirit, let us pray.  God of abundance, we commit to sharing our time, talents, and treasures so we that we may be a light and a witness to the transforming love of Jesus Christ.  Amen.

**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 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.

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.]

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

Holy One, you transform us as you nourish us here.

May we nourish others with your presence.  Amen.

**OUR FATHER                                                                                                (Gail DeGeorge)**

Now let us pray in harmony with Christians throughout the world in the words that Jesus gave us:

***All (muted):*** Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy 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                                                         (Judy Sholes)**

While remaining muted, let us reach out to bless one another:

God of hope, who brought love into this world,
be the love that dwells between us.
God of hope, who brought peace into this world, be the peace that dwells between us.
God of hope, who brought joy into this world,
be the joy that dwells between us.
God of hope, the rock we stand upon,
be the center, the focus of our lives
always, and particularly this Advent time.

Amen.

**CLOSING SONG – PSALM 85 (Marty Haugen) (Reggie Ott)**

Refrain: **Lord, let us see your kindness.**

Let us hear what our God proclaims:

Peace to the people of God!

Salvation is near to the ones who fear him. **Refrain**

Kindness and truth, justice and peace,

Truth shall spring up like water from the earth.

Justice shall flow from the heavens. **Refrain**

The Lord will come and you shall know his love.

Justice shall walk in his pathways,

Salvation the gift that he brings. **Refrain**

**RESOURCES:**

Judy Sholes Advent Prayers

 USBBC: Readings for Dec. 6, 2020: Second week of Advent

[MORRICONE: GABRIEL'S OBOE (THE MISSION) AND MAIN THEME ...](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PygPri0-LNA)

[*WWW.YOUTUBE.COM*](http://www.youtube.com)

COMFORT YE, EVERY VALLEY (HANDEL'S MESSIAH) GRAMOPHONE CHORUS FEAT. EBENEZER ANTWI

Google Advanced Images.com - slides

Sister Raphael Considine’s poem “[Trasna](https://jpbennett.tumblr.com/post/62495573715/trasna-by-raphael-considine-pbvm)”