

Holy Thursday with Solidarity with Sisters

TECHNICAL CHECK-IN (Betty)

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

Have bread and a cup with wine or other beverage?

We sent the files of readings, responses, and music to our regular list...

Mute button on/off? – on phone? on Zoom? Needed even during singing.

Camera on?

Gallery view to see everyone?

Now let's put technical things aside and begin.

WELCOME (Suzie)

I'm Suzie De Quattro. Betty and I and all the readers are members of Solidarity with Sisters. [If there are more new people: We are a group of lay women and men who began meeting in 2012 with the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. Through our experiences together,] we've come to value a more contemplative way of presence and of prayer. So throughout this time of prayer today, we will pause together in sacred silence.

As we prepare to begin -- This is a time when we're all aware of our breath. Breathing problems are often associated with the coronavirus. So let's sit comfortably, in a way that fully supports you. Notice your breath as it goes in and out. Become aware of divine presence in you and around you.

We begin with 3 deep breaths. One to be here... one to be together... and one to create space for Jesus to be with us tonight.

CALL TO WORSHIP (Suzie)

We come together tonight to celebrate Holy Thursday together.

Because of the pandemic, we can't share our usual Eucharistic celebration.

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But we can share a common table here online.
We can break bread in the fullness of the tradition of Agape gatherings.
St. Francis of Assisi, who was not a priest,
used to bless and break bread, and share it with his brothers.
This practice is ancient, going back to the hospitality that
our Father Abraham showed to his visitors.
It's not the full celebration of the Eucharist, but there is a relationship,
in much the same way that blessing with Holy Water is a reminder of our Baptism.

As we said as we left our Palm Sunday time together on Sunday,
our prayer this week doesn't really come to an end.
As Jesus rode into Jerusalem, we were with him –
In risk and in trust – and many of us as the donkey, as it turned out! .
We have remembered that his disciple Judas went to the chief priests
and accepted 30 pieces of silver.
Tonight we celebrate risk and trust again
In the aching, self-giving love of Jesus' last dinner with his friends.
He foresaw his betrayal and death, and he offered his entire life
in communion with those who love him.

GATHERING PRAYER (Suzie)

Jesus, we are with you and for you, as you are with us and for us.
Give us the courage to walk with you.
Help us to let go, and to let come.
Help us to look at everyone without exception
with loving eyes, as you do,
and, with courage, to walk forward into that love,
no matter what.

SILENCE

READINGS

Betty: Last night began the Jewish Passover. Let's recognize our union with the Jewish people as we join Jesus and his disciples in what many believe was their final Seder together. Notice any words that especially catch your attention as we listen to Stu Sklamm read from the 12th chapter of Exodus.

READING FROM EXODUS 12 (Stu)

Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, "Speak to the whole community of Israel and say, 'On the tenth day of this month take an animal from the flock for each family: one animal for each household. If the household is too small for the animal, join with your neighbor, taking into account what portion each can eat. It must be an animal without blemish, a male one year old; you may choose it either from the sheep or from the goats.'"

"You must keep it until the fourteenth day of the month when the whole assembly of the community of Israel will slaughter it at twilight. Some of the blood must then be taken and put on both door-posts and the lintel of the houses where it is eaten. That night, the flesh must be eaten, roasted over the fire; it must be eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs."

"This is how you must eat it: with your loins girt, sandals on your feet, and your staff in hand. You must eat it hurriedly like those who are in flight: it is a Passover of the Lord."

"That night, I shall go through Egypt and strike down all the first-born in Egypt, man and beast alike, and shall execute justice on all the gods of Egypt, I, Yahweh! The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are. When I see the blood I shall pass over you, and you will escape the destructive plague when I strike Egypt."

"This day must be commemorated by you, and you must keep it as a feast in Yahweh's honor. You must keep it as a feast-day for all generations; this is a decree for all time."

SILENCE (Betty)

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Before silence: Let's take a little time to reflect on this story. When we take the Passover as our model for Eucharist, we are challenged to be willing to proclaim our faith in public, to hold lightly to our comforts, and to be ready for the next step, "loins girt" – even though we don't know what that step will be. What does this mean to you?

After silence: As Mary Ott reads from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians, notice a word or phrase that resonates for you tonight:

READING FROM CORINTHIANS (1 Corinthians 11:23-26) (Mary)

Brothers and sisters:

I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you.

Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.

SILENCE (Betty)

Before silence: Before the silence: I invite you to take your word or phrase into yourself. Repeat it to yourself, allowing it to interact with your inner world. See what rises in you – a feeling.. a word... a prayer....

After silence: Let's listen as Lynn Bufka reads from the Gospel of John.

GOSPEL (FROM JOHN 13) (Lynn)

Before the feast of Passover,
Jesus rose from supper and took off his outer garments.
He took a towel and tied it around his waist.
Then he poured water into a basin
and began to wash the disciples' feet
and dry them with the towel around his waist.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him,
"Master, are you going to wash my feet?"
Jesus answered and said to him,
"What I am doing, you do not understand now,
but you will understand later."
Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet."
Jesus answered him,
"Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me."
Simon Peter said to him,
"Master, then not only my feet, but my hands and head as well."

When he had washed their feet
Jesus said to them, "Do you realize what I have done for you?
You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am.
If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet,
you ought to wash one another's feet.
I have given you a model to follow,
so that as I have done for you, you should also do."

SILENCE (Betty)

Before the silence: Notice that when Jesus says "do this in memory of me," he's talking about washing each other's feet. "If I have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet.... As I have done for you, you should also do." Let's take a little time to ask ourselves, Am I doing this? How?

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SHARING (Betty)

In just a moment, I will invite you to share your reflections. God is alive and active in this community, and we can expand upon what we see individually as we listen to each other.

After we listen to everyone's individual reflections, I will ask if someone would be willing to express what you heard as a sense of the whole –to pull together our individual reflections into some unity, so we can recognize how the Spirit is moving in our community this evening.

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. If more than one person speaks at once, one will go first and the other will speak after that.

Who would like to begin our sharing?

(Sharing)

THE WORD OF GOD AMONG US ALL TODAY (Betty)

Has everyone spoken who wishes to?... Thank you.

Would someone be willing to express what you heard as a sense of the whole —to pull together our individual reflections into some unity, so we can recognize the meaning of the word of God to us and in us this morning?

Thank you.

Now Joan Sklamm will lead us in prayer

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL (Joan)

Let us pray together.

We rejoice that Jesus offers himself as bread for the world,
and we know that he really means it.

He knows the gifts and challenges of human relationships,
the depths of human suffering.

And in this messy world,
in the midst of this pandemic,
on this night, we remember Jesus' words:

I commission you
to go out and to bear fruit,
Fruit that will last.
What I command you
is to love one another.

Great God, open wide our minds and hearts
so that in this messy world, we can take the risk of love
as Jesus does.

Suzie:

Now let's pause to remember what has risen in us as we have shared this evening, and the prayers that we carry with us all the time. (Pause.) Now, for what shall we pray? Please unmute yourself as you speak. Please end your petition with "for this we pray." We'll respond with: "We ask this in communion with Jesus Christ."

(Prayers)

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 (Suzie)

Remembering how Jesus gave us his life...

Remembering the lasting power of our many Eucharistic celebrations...

We pray:

O God who is love,

we take our bread in hand, as Jesus did,

and we let your blessing pour into it and into us. (Pause)

Thank you for forming us into a holy communion in you.

Help us to become your bread

and to bring communion into our world.

Let us break our bread, and offer some gesture of sharing. (Pause to do this.)

Let us eat of our bread, absorbing into ourselves the blessing of your presence. (Pause.)

Now we take our cup, as Jesus did,

and ask you to fill the cup of our lives

with your holy and healing presence.

We drink from the cup of your grace

with endless gratitude and joy.

A HOLY THURSDAY BLESSING BY JAN RICHARDSON (Anne Regan)

As if you could
stop this blessing
from washing
over you.

As if you could
turn it back,
could return it
from your body
to the bowl,

I

from the bowl
to the pitcher,
from the pitcher
to the hand
that set this blessing
on its way.

As if you could
change the course
by which this blessing
flows.

As if you could
control how it
pours over you—
unbidden,
unsought,
unasked,

yet startling
in the way
it matches the need
you did not know
you had.

As if you could
become undrenched.

As if you could
resist gathering it up
in your two hands
and letting your body
follow the arc
this blessing makes.

I

(Pause.)

OUR FATHER (Suzie)

Now let's pray in harmony with all Christians throughout the world in the words that Jesus taught us.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy 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 lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil,

for the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER (Suzie)

Now we will follow as Jesus goes forth into a time that will require love beyond any limits. As Sister Norma Pimentel said last year, "For extreme times of pain and suffering, extreme levels of love are needed." O God of endless giving, let us be bread, broken and shared.

CLOSING SONG: Let us be bread (Reggie) (Verses 1, 3, and 4)

Refrain:

Let us be bread, blessed by the Lord,
Broken and shared, life for the world.

Let us be wine, love freely poured.

Let us be one in the Lord!