**Solidarity with Sisters Communal Prayer for Sunday, Nov. 22, 2020**

**Feast of Christ the King**

 *“We are bread for one another.*

*Broken, we gather; nourished, we reach out.”*

**CHECK-IN (Betty)**

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

* We sent the files of readings, responses, and lyrics.
* Camera: turn on if you want. Gallery view option.
* Mute/Unmute: know how? Needed even during singing.
* I will now mute everybody. Unmute to speak.
* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?

**WELCOME (Suzie)**

Welcome, everyone!

* Thanks to Judy Sholes and Maryann Dolan for preparing today’s communal prayer.
* Thanks to Stu Sklamm and Reggie Ott for leading us in music.
* Thanks to readers: Sr. Marie McCarthy, Bill Fanelli, Anne Regan, Pat Lawlor, Peggy Thompson, and Gail DeGeorge. If you’d like to read in future Sundays, just get in touch.

**SETTLING IN (Suzie)**

Let’s move from getting here to being here. Settle into a comfortable position. Feel if there is any tightness in your body and let your muscles loosen. Notice your breath as it goes in and out. As you exhale, let tensions leave you. As you inhale, feel God’s love flowing into you. And now let’s take 3 deep breaths. One to be here… one to be together….and one to create space for how God will lead us today.

And now Stu Sklamm will lead us into our celebration with the hymn.

**OPENING SONG: God of Day and God of Darkness (Stu Sklamm)**

God of day and God of darkness,
now we stand before the night.
As the shadows stretch and deepen,
come and make our darkness bright.
All creation still is groaning
for the dawning of your might.
When the Sun of peace and justice
fills the earth with radiant light.

 Show us Christ in one another.
Make us servants strong and true.
Give us all your love of justice,
so we do what you would do.
Let us call all people holy.
Let us pledge our lives anew.
Make us one with all the lowly.
Let us all be one in you.

**GREETING (Maryann Dolan)**

Sisters and brothers, rejoice!The Spirit of Christ is among us! Alleluia!

**All:** And all God’s people reply: Amen! Alleluia!

**CALL TO WORSHIP (Maryann)**

We come together today, in our worry and in our hope, because it is with each other that we experience ourselves as the people of God and the body of Christ. We gather to celebrate the great fact that God loves us and will act in us and through us to do what we can to heal the world.

Love’s great design is for wholeness and Richard Rohr reminds us that, ”we must overcome the illusion of separateness. God’s job description is to draw us back into primal and intimate relationship.”

Now, Marie McCarthy will lead us in our Gathering Prayer

**GATHERING PRAYER (Marie McCarthy)**

God, lover of life, lover of these lives,
God, lover of our souls, lover of our bodies, lover of all that exists . . .
In fact, it is your love that keeps it all alive . . .
May we live in this love.
May we never doubt this love.
May we know that we are love,
That we were created for love,
That we are a reflection of you,
That you love yourself in us and therefore we are perfectly lovable.

May we never doubt this deep and abiding and perfect goodness.

We are because you are.

Amen.

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME (Maryann)**

Today, the feast of Christ the King is the last Sunday of the liturgical year. Though the focus of the feast appears to be on royalty, today's readings provide images of shepherd, sheep and goats. The ancient biblical image of King was one who cared for the helpless. In the first reading, the leaders or shepherds ignored the needs of the people in great danger while providing for themselves. Ezekiel, the prophet announces that it is the Lord God who shepherds them and cares for them. He paints a picture of peace and justice with the Lord as shepherd.

Matthew’s gospel is a reflection of the Ezekiel reading. In it,it is Jesus who is the image of aJewish King who identifies with the helpless in our midst*.* We hear in this parable a final judgement and separation of sheep and goats. Both sheep and goats were useful and valued by the Jews of those times. In the gospel, neither group had anticipated the criteria that would determine their fate. None had consciously recognized Christ in others in need. The King, the Risen Jesus, has become one of us and all the nations are members of the flock.

Sister Mary McGlone’s commentary sums up today’s parable in an etching called, “The Christ of the Breadline”. It offers an invitation to know Christ in solidarity with the poor, to enlarge our hearts and to make us more human.

After each reading, Anne Regan will offer questions before we pause for silent reflection. Don’t feel you have to answer all questions. To stay with only one of them might lead you into a deeper place.”

And now Bill Fanelli will read from the 34th chapter of Ezekiel.

**READING 1** Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17 **(Bill Fanelli)**

Thus says the Lord God: I myself will look after and tend my sheep.

As a shepherd tends his flock when he finds himself among his scattered sheep, so will I tend my sheep. I will rescue them from every place where they were scattered when it was cloudy and dark.

I myself will pasture my sheep; I myself will give them rest, says the Lord God. The lost I will seek out, the strayed I will bring back, the injured I will bind up, the sick I will heal.

As for you, my sheep, says the Lord God, I will judge between one sheep and another, between rams and goats

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS (Anne Regan)**

How do you feel about a shepherd leaving his vulnerable flock to search for sheep that might be scattered in numerous locations?

Have you ever rescued someone or been rescued from a difficult situation? If so, how did it change your life?

**SILENCE (Sound a chime after 2 minutes.) (Judy)**

Now Pat Lawlor will read from the 25th chapter of Matthew (Judy)

**READING 2 – Matthew 25:31-46 (Pat Lawlor )**

Jesus said to his disciples:
“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.’

Then the righteous will answer him and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?’ And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least brothers of mine, you did for me.’

Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.’

Then they will answer and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?’ He will answer them, ‘Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.’ And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS (Anne Regan)**

In this parable, Jesus makes it clear that as disciples, we should see Christ in one another. Is this ever hard for you? If so, what can you do about that?

What surprises or delights you in this final judgment gospel today?

**SILENCE (Sound a chime after 2 minutes.) (Judy)**

**READING** 3 - **Extracts from the Commentary by Mary McGlone (Judy Sholes)**

(Christ of the Breadlines print <https://www.flickr.com/photos/jimforest/8367811926/>4 **(Betty)** please display right after the silence bell rings and as the name of the reader is announced, and keep up for the duration of the reading.)

This “Christ of the Breadlines" etching by Fritz Eichenberg illustrates Christ's choice to identify with the vulnerable. Whereas humanity tends to envision the divine as the utmost expression of magnificent "things that matter," Jesus tells us to seek God's self-revelation at the lowest end of the scales of power and prestige.

Jesus didn’t tell this parable to scare us into charity. That motivation would leave us trapped in our egoism, even if we did lessen others’ suffering. Jesus knew that genuine encounters with the poor enlarge the heart and the vision of the givers. Solidarity makes us all more human.

 Christ invites us to know him in relationship with his beloved poor. When we fall in love with Christ in the poor and with the poor in him, we will inevitably want to serve him in and with them.

Today’s feast encapsulates the Gospel irony of firsts and lasts, of losing life and finding it. One way to sum it up combines *The Baltimore Catechism* with Pope Francis and says that those who decide to know, love and serve Christ, the King of the Universe, will end up smelling like his sheep. Happily, ever after.

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS** - **(Anne Regan)**

Pope Francis called upon the clergy to smell like sheep. What would it mean to you personally to “smell like the sheep”? Would your comfort level allow this?

Thanksgiving is a time of community and solidarity. In this unusual year, how can Thanksgiving help us to expand our solidarity with others?

**SILENCE (Sound a chime after [2 minutes?].) (Judy)**

Judy: And now Peggy Thompson will lead our sharing.

**SHARING (Peggy Thompson)**

We invite you to briefly share what emerged in **your** heart this morning as you listened and as you reflected on these readings. To help everyone glimpse the many ways God is among us, we ask you to speak with some conciseness, and only once until everyone has had an opportunity. 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’s leave a 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 for 30 seconds.)

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

(Sharing)

Thank you.

Loving God . Knowing you are hearing us better than we are speaking, we offer these prayers in all the holy names of God, Amen.

Peggy: Now Gail DeGeorge will lead us in prayer.

**COMMUNITY PRAYER (Gail DeGeorge)**

Humbly mindful of God’s mercy and powerful, transforming love, now let us pray for ourselves, our brothers and sisters, and for the good of our fragile world. Please end your intention with…for this, we pray… Our response will be, Loving God, hear our prayer.

For courage and compassion in times of crisis and conflict to act justly, love mercifully, and to walk humbly with God…for this, we pray. Loving God, hear our prayer.

During this time of deep concern because of all that divides us, may we follow the example of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious sisters as they speak of light and promote hope. For this, we pray. Loving God, hear our prayer.

As we celebrate Thanksgiving in a different way this year, deprived of our traditional family gatherings, may we be grateful for the new experiences of grace with which we have been gifted, such as the gathering of this blessed community with whom we share our journey..for this, we pray. Loving God, hear our prayer.

For all who are engaged in efforts rooted in ecology, responsive to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor… for this, we pray... Loving God, hear our prayer.

That those who are hardened in divisive political views, might be granted the grace to approach those with whom they disagree with softened hearts, open ears and a willingness to work together for the common good…for this, we pray… Loving God, hear our prayer.

For what else should we pray?

(Shared prayers)

Thank you.

Loving God, we place all our prayers, those spoken and those unspoken, into your loving care. We will do all that we can to put our prayers into action – while entrusting the outcome to you. Amen.

**OFFERTORY (Judy)**

Today is the 57th anniversary of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. In his inaugural address, he called upon us to ask not what our country can do for us, but what we can do for our country. In the same spirit, today’s readings call upon us to serve those in need…the scattered, the hungry, the naked, the poor… rather than focusing only on ourselves. Let us take time to name within ourselves how we might fall in love with Christ, through and with the vulnerable people of the world. (Pause)

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION (Judy)**

O Great Love, we are humbled and emboldened

to know that you trust us to be your body in this world.

We offer you our lives. We give you thanks for your love. [Pause.]

We remember the night before Jesus died.

Jesus, who was having dinner with his friends,

looked at what was in front of him, the bread and the cup,

and he 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, you transform us as you nourish us here.

May we nourish others with your presence.

Amen.

**OUR FATHER (Maryann)**

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

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be your 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.

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 (Maryann)**

Let us now extend our arms to pray the final blessing over one other.

May you be a star in the darkness,

May you be a staff to the weak.

And may the power of the Spirit

Pour on you richly and generously

Today and in the days to come. Amen. (The Iona Community)

Now Reggie Ott will lead us in our closing hymn, “All the Ends of the Earth.”

**CLOSING SONG: “All the Ends of the Earth (Reggie)**

 *“All the Ends of the Earth” by Bob Dufford, S.J. Based on Psalm 98 Antiphon*

 **Refrain:**

All the ends of the earth, all you creatures of the sea,
Lift up your eyes to the wonders of the Lord.
For the Lord of the earth, the Master of the sea,
has come with justice for the world.

**Verse 1**

Break into song at the deeds of the Lord,
the wonders God has done in ev’ry age.  Refrain

**Verse 2**

Heaven and earth shall rejoice in your might;
ev’ry heart, ev’ry nation call you Lord.  Refrain

**RESOURCES**

Excerpt from St. Rose of Lima Mission Statement

Richard Rohr CAC Daily Meditation 11/13/2020

Mary McGlone, C.S.J. Commentary, NCR, November 13-26, 2020