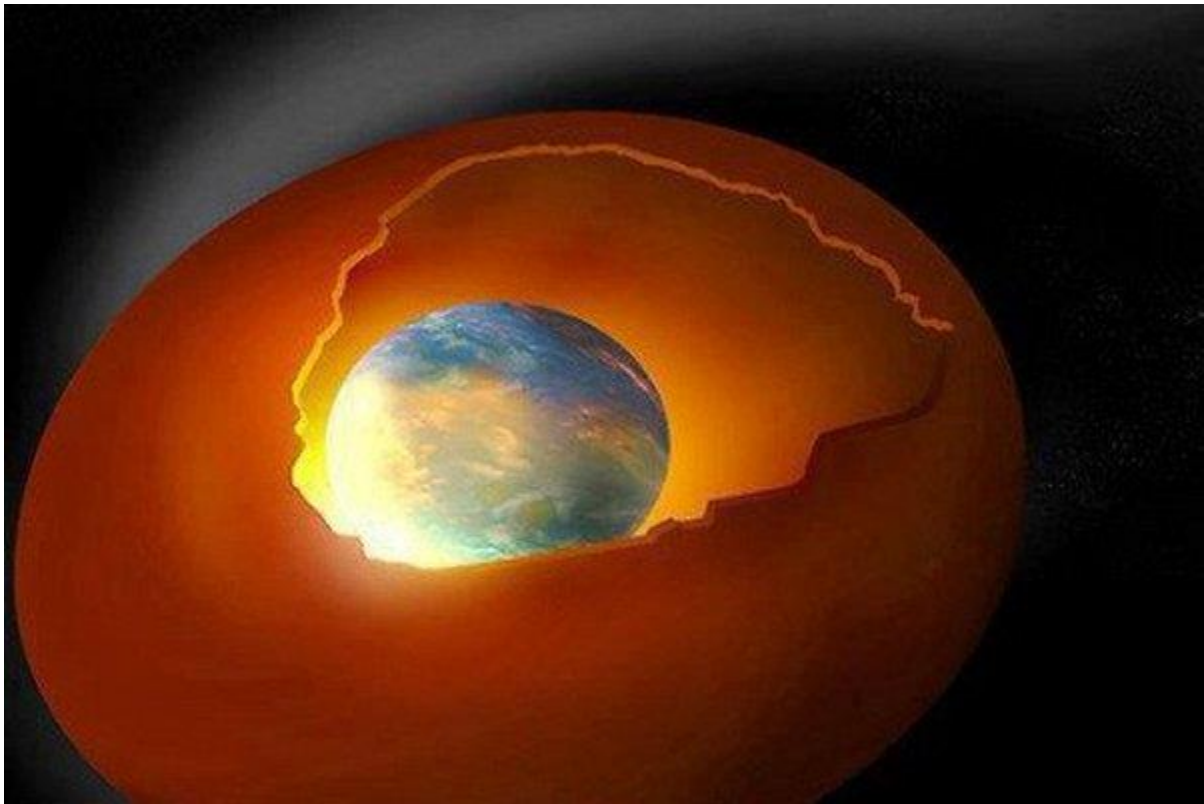


## Solidarity with Sisters Communal Contemplative Prayer (Lent 2020)



**Wherever we are, we enter holy silence together, open to divine movement within us and among us.  
Use as much or as little of what's below as you wish.**

### **GATHERING**

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 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.

## **BEING HERE: Come as you are, in divine presence**

Begin seated in a position that feels stable and comfortable. Let your breath slow and deepen and find its natural pace, with tensions flowing out as you exhale. Feel the gift of air filling your body. Give yourself whatever time you need.

Become aware of divine presence in you and around you. Welcome this presence. What is your name for God in this moment? Gracious Love, Jesus, Father, Mother, Christ, Spirit, Holy One, Mystery... Be as creative as you wish. Use that name in place of "God" below. Give yourself whatever time you need.

Become aware of the deep longing in your heart at this moment. What is it that you seek from *God*? If your longing feels "tacky" or not quite right, suspend judgment and look at what's at the base of that desire. Check in with your deepest and truest self to know what you seek from *God*. Find a word or two to express it. Give yourself whatever time you need.

Combine your name for God and your deep longing into a few words. An example might be "inner freedom (your deep longing) in Holy Mystery (your name for God)." Spend several minutes breathing this prayer. Make it your own. Allow *God* to inhabit this prayer.

## **AWARENESS**

O *God*, you abide in us. We abide in you.  
Your life holds all that is.  
You invite us to look around  
and to see the realities and the longings on all sides  
with your eyes  
which are always loving.

We stand at a crossroads.  
Many roads converge here.  
We open our tent to those coming from all directions  
as a way-station where mercy is free for everyone  
and justice grows into the peace of *God*.

What needs do I especially see as I look around?  
What do I notice as I look at them with *God's* eyes of love?

(Pause.)

## **INTENTION**

At this crossroads,  
we encounter family and strangers, good friends and people who are difficult for us to be with.

They pass by or ask for sustenance or just to be noticed and greeted.

How can we become a crossroads  
that is an oasis of communion?

(Pause for as long as you wish.)

At this crossroads, we choose solidarity with Catholic sisters. This week we especially pray to share in their...

(week 1) ...commitment to creative nonviolence. (Sisters choose this response as a way of being, and as a public stance in their responses in public conflicts, and in leadership of organizations like Pax Christi.)

(week 2) ...work for migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers throughout the world, and especially those who seek hope in our country. (Over 1,000 sisters volunteered at the US-Mexico border in 2019.)

(week 3) ...creative, collaborative work to end human trafficking. (The group Sisters Against Human Trafficking has catalyzed action by the US hotel industry and airline industry, and is now publicly urging Sysco to guarantee that there is no trafficking in its enormous supply chain.)

(week 4) ...commitment be a voice for the voiceless and to mend the gaps between wealthy people and impoverished people in the USA. (NETWORK lobby, the Catholic social justice lobby founded by Catholic sisters in 1971, advocates with Congress and the White House and listens to needs throughout the country as Nuns on the Bus.)

(week 5) ... care for creation and active generation of climate solutions. (Catholic sisters were pioneers in Earth action and continue to advocate, innovate, and work for systemic change.)

(week 6) ...commitment to remove barriers and create a welcoming spirit for all within the church. (US sisters' congregations have been taking a hard, honest look at racism in their own histories and in their own selves. New Ways Ministries, co-founded by a Catholic sister in 1975, advocates for the LGBTQ community. There are many, many more examples of sisters creating a welcoming spirit.)

O *God*, 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 in the face of racism, migration, and climate crisis. You love all of creation into being. We commit ourselves to create communion and examine root causes of injustice, looking especially at how the roots of these tragedies intersect.

*God*, let your creative spark in us  
illuminate our vision and our imagination  
to see what we cannot now see,  
to become what we do not yet know how to be.

(About 30-40 minutes of silence)

At a long-ago crossroads, Abraham and Sarah welcomed strangers to their tent, and new life was born. *God*, give us new life.

### **COMMUNION**

Let us turn to each other, across silence and distance, knowing that in communion we become able to offer communion to others.

We nourish one another with the words 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 thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

### **CONCLUDING PRAYER**

*God*, we ask for courage and wisdom to stand together at the crossroads and welcome those who come, offering nourishment, listening to their questions, engaging in conversation, and letting something new be born among us. Amen.

### **SIGN OF PEACE**

As we go forth, let us offer each other a sign of peace – through gestures or in our hearts.

Main sources:

2013-14 Solidarity with Sisters Lenten Communal Prayer by Judith Sholes

Keynote address by Sister Pat Murray to the 2019 Assembly of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious

Richard Rohr 2020 invitation to contemplation through the naming of God and of our deep longing