

SOLIDARITY WITH SISTERS' SUNDAY COMMUNAL PRAYER – APRIL 19, 2010

“When we rise, we rise together.” – Sr. Helen Prejean’s Easter Sunday [reflection](#)

TECHNICAL 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.

Zoom: turn on cameras - Gallery view option.

Mute: know how? On phone? On Zoom? Needed even during singing.

Now let’s put technical things aside now.

SETTLING IN (Suzie)

Let’s get settled as we prepare to begin. Settle into a comfortable position. 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 God alive among us!

Now Stu Sklamm will lead us into our celebration.

OPENING – To Jesus Christ, Our Sovereign King (Stu)

WELCOME (Suzie)

Suzie: Let us rejoice, for Jesus Christ is risen! Alleluia! Alleluia!

All: He is risen indeed! Alleluia! Alleluia!

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 in this strange and often difficult time, on this Sunday before Earth Day, our time together this morning will be radiant with the light of Christ.

GATHERING PRAYER (Suzie)

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 Easter season
that pulls us into resurrection together.
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.

INTRODUCTION TO THEMES (Suzie)

The disciples did not see the Crucifixion as a gift. Their beloved Teacher was dead. They were betrayed and were betrayers, they scattered in fear. All seemed lost, and yet what was born of death, was Resurrection.

Today we begin in the Upper Room. It has been 3 days since Jesus's crucifixion and just hours since Mary came to tell Jesus's friends that she had seen the Risen One in the garden. Those gathered in that room felt alone, confused and afraid. There was danger

in the world outside their walls. Yet they took solace in their relationships with each other and the community they had formed over the last 3 years.

We too are gathered alone, sometimes afraid, often confused. What is this time going to mean for us as we wait? – Can we find new ways to relate with each other, with our church, with the earth? Can we find what is fundamentally true and cling to it even as the world as we once knew it calls us back?

Listen to the words of Christopher Fry:

Thank God, our time is now
When wrong comes up to face us everywhere
Never to leave until we take
The greatest stride of soul that people ever took.
Affairs are now soul-size.
The enterprise is exploration into God.

Let us explore together, in the Gospel of John, the Upper room, the wounds of Jesus, the breath of the Holy Spirit, and the need of Thomas of experience the risen Lord directly.

Joan Sklamm will begin with the 20th chapter of John's Gospel, followed by Jim De Quattro offering us questions for reflection.

GOSPEL 1 (Joan)

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews.

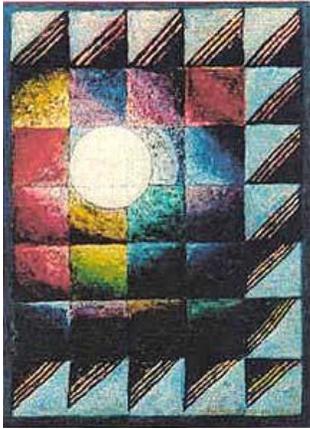
(PAUSE for a few seconds)

Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, "Peace be with you," and, after saying this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy at seeing the Lord, and he said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me,

so am I sending you.” After saying this he breathed on them and said: “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

[Betty will put an artwork onto the Zoom screen, replacing our faces: Sr. France White’s “The Promise” with the word “Breath” as its heading.]



Sister France White, SHCJ – shcj.org/white_reproductions.html

[That artwork onscreen is the cue for Jim to read the following:]

Jim:

Have you ever felt locked in because of fear? (Pause.)

Did God meet you there? (Pause.)

What does it feel like to unclench yourself, to breathe?

SILENCE (3 minutes)

After the silence – **Betty:** Richard McGinnis will continue with John’s Gospel.

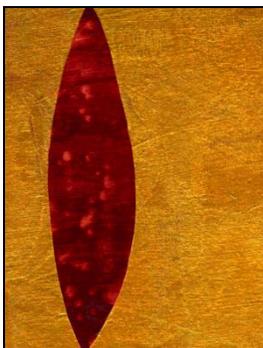
GOSPEL 2 -- Richard

Thomas, called the Twin, who was one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord," but he answered, "Unless I can see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe." Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. "Peace be with you," he said. Then he spoke to Thomas, "Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side. Do not be unbelieving any more but believe." "Thomas replied, 'My Lord and my God!'"

Jesus said to him: "You believe because you can see me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

[Betty will put an artwork onto the Zoom screen, replacing our faces. -- Jan Richardson's "Into the Wound" with that title above it.]



Jan Richardson – <https://www.janrichardson.com/>

[That artwork onscreen is the cue for Jim to read the following:]

Jim:

Has a friend ever told you of a powerful experience of theirs, and you didn't believe it? (Pause.)

Have you ever asked someone to touch a physical or emotional wound of your own? (Pause.)

What connection might you see between touching someone's wound and believing in someone? (Pause.)

SILENCE (3 minutes)

To end the silence – **Betty**: Mary Ott will expand on these themes with a reflection that draws from several sources.

REFLECTION -- Mary

We may continue throughout these 50 days of Easter in what Julio Gambuto calls “The Big Pause.: Like the disciples we will go on with our lives but within the confines of our homes and what Zoom and Instacart can provide. We can't walk the road to Emmaus or fish on the shores of Galilee. What we can do is take stock of our lives. And like the disciples we can emerge on Pentecost as the Church born into the Gospel, full of the joy of the Holy Spirit and ready to (slowly and carefully) live in the Kingdom of God.

Gambuto writes:

I hope you might consider this: What happened is inexplicably incredible. It's the greatest gift ever unwrapped. Not the deaths, not the virus, but The Great Pause. It is, in a word, profound. Please don't recoil from the bright light beaming through the window. I know it hurts your eyes. It hurts mine, too. But the curtain is wide open. What the crisis has given us is a once-in-a-lifetime chance to see ourselves and our country in the plainest of views. At no other time, ever in our lives, have we gotten the opportunity to see what would happen if the world simply stopped. Here it is. We're in it.

From one citizen to another, I beg of you: take a deep breath, ignore the deafening noise, and think deeply about what you want to put back into your life. This is our chance to define a new version of normal, a rare and truly sacred (yes, sacred) opportunity to get rid of the BS and to only bring back what works for us, what makes our lives richer, what makes our kids happier, what makes us truly proud. We care

deeply about one another. That is clear. That can be seen in every supportive Facebook post, in every meal dropped off for a neighbor, in every Zoom birthday party. We are a good people. And as a good people, we want to define — on our own terms — what this country looks like in five, ten, fifty years. This is our chance to do that, the biggest one we have ever gotten. And the best one we'll ever get.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

[Betty will put an artwork onto the Zoom screen, replacing our faces. -- Eddy Mann's "The Cenacle" with the words "The Upper Room" as its heading:



Eddy Mann – <https://fineartamerica.com/featured/the-cenacle-eddy-mann.html>

[That artwork onscreen is the cue for Jim to read the following:]

Jim:

In what way do you see this time as a gift? (Pause.)

What would you put into your life? What would that look like? (Pause.)

Can you see a first step into the Kingdom of God?

SILENCE (3 minutes)

SHARING (Betty)

In just a moment, I will invite you to share your reflections. Everyone's individual reflections let us glimpse together the infinite variety of God among us.

After we listen to each other, 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 morning.

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 Lynn Bufka will lead us in prayer.

INTENTION (Lynn)

Easter calls us to recognize our own participation in resurrection. The global crises of this time call us to recognize ourselves as one family, living on one Earth. With the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, we pray: “May our journey into the Easter season help us remember that we are surrounded by the presence of Love. May we live in that awareness recognizing that every breath is indeed a resurrection.”

God within us, be at work in us so that we hold nothing back in becoming your Easter people, rising up with you for the transformation of the world. For this we pray. Holy One, hear our prayer.

God among us, help us to find our path in solidarity with all who are most vulnerable, and with Earth itself. For this we pray. Holy One, hear our prayer.

God in all things, thank you for the endless ways you are present during this pandemic – with people suffering because their health, lives, and livelihoods have been harmed or lost; in courageous workers of every kind; in leaders who seek the common good; in people who creatively help others in informal and volunteer ways; and in all of us united in hope that we come out of this as one family worldwide. For this we pray. Holy One, hear our prayer.

Let's remember the feelings and prayers that arose in us as we shared reflections, and also the prayers we carry with us. (Pause)

Now, for what else shall we pray? Please unmute yourself as you speak. Please end your petition with "for this we pray." We will respond with: Holy One, hear our prayer.

(People speak.)

Suzie: 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)

Let's remember the future that was emerging 2000 years ago. The book of Acts tells us that after Pentecost the Christian community...

“...devoted themselves
to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life,
to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.
Awe came upon everyone.
All who believed were together and owned everything in common;
they sold their goods and possessions and shared the proceeds among themselves,
according to what each one needed.
They went as a body to the Temple every day
but met in their houses for the breaking of bread.
They shared their food gladly and generously.
They praised God
And every day the Lord added to their community.

And so let us, like that community, our early sisters and brothers,
remember the night before Jesus died.
The first thing Jesus did was to give thanks.
So let us know that God is among us
and give thanks. (Pause.)

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 them.
So let us, too, invite God right now
into what is front and center in our lives
and know that God will indeed enter what we offer – and bless it. (Pause.)

Alive in God’s presence,
let us risk being transformed into bread for the world.

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)

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

CLOSING SONG: "We Are Called" by David Haas -- Reggie

1. Come! Live in the light!
Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord!
We are called to be light for the kingdom,
to live in the freedom of the city of God!

Refrain: We are called to act with justice.

We are called to love tenderly.

We are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God.

2. Come! Open your heart!
Show your mercy to all those in fear!
We are called to be hope for the hopeless,
so all hatred and blindness will be no more! Refrain

3. Sing! Sing a new song!
Sing of that great day when all will be one!
God will reign and we'll walk with each other
as sisters and brothers united in love! Refrain