**Solidarity with Sisters’ Sunday Communal Prayer – April 26, 2010**

**“When we rise, we rise together.” – Sr. Helen Prejean’s Easter Sunday** [**reflection**](https://www.catholicwomenpreach.org/preaching/04122020)

**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.

**WELCOME (Betty)**

Welcome, everyone!

Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?

Readers will be from SwS and also from this bigger community. Any of the rest of you who would like to read in future Sundays? Please get in touch.

**SETTLING IN (Betty)**

Let’s get settled as we prepare to begin. Be sure ou’re in 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 with “Rejoice, the Lord is King!”

**OPENING – “Rejoice, the Lord is King!” (Stu)**

**GREETING (Suzie)**

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

All: And all God’s people reply: 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 after 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.

Now WHO will introduce our theme for today.

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME (Suzie)**

Today we walk with the disciples who are leaving Jerusalem after Jesus’ death. They’ve heard rumors that Jesus is alive again. They’re confused. What gets them to turn around and walk back toward Jerusalem, where things are still very dangerous? How do they recognize Jesus and make sense of their real situation at that moment? That’s the question for them, and for us. Sister Carol Zinn’s reflection helps to frame it in a way that follows from what we shared last Sunday about The Great Pause:

“Yes, the most recent event that has changed our world forever swirls in my body, mind, heart, spirit, and soul. I imagine we meet one another in that swirl several times each day. And I ask myself: Which event? Which event that has changed our world forever? Which event swirls within, around and beyond me/us? COVID-19 or Easter or a combination of both?

“Between this Sunday and Pentecost, our global, national, ecclesial, civil, and religious-life worlds seem poised for unprecedented upheaval whether we resist or receive it. By Pentecost we will have embraced or denied how we choose to reframe and recreate our lives. And hopefully we will have discerned our way into the first steps towards a future none of us could have imagined.

“Yes, there are life-changing choices to be made because life-changing events have taken hold of us. The Easter season scriptures speak to me of such profound choices for these Easter COVID-19 times. We hear the Risen One invite the disciples, whose lives were upended by the unprecedented events they witnessed, to consider the reality set before them:

• “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” (4/19)

• “What are you discussing as you walk along? Oh, how foolish you are.” (4/26)

• “I have come so that you may have life and have it more abundantly.” (5/3)

• “Do not let your hearts be troubled. I am the way, the truth and the life.’ (5/10)

• “The Father will send another Advocate to be with you always.” (5/17)

This is our journey from now to Pentecost.

**Suzie:** We’ve divided the Gospel into two parts to help us focus. Tim and Mia Brown will read to us from the Gospel of Luke followed by Jim De Quattro offering questions for reflection. Don’t feel you have to answer all the reflection questions. Just follow what most catches your attention. To follow just one of them might lead you into a deeper place.

**GOSPEL 1 (Tim or Mia Brown)**

Now that very same day, two of them were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking together about all that had happened.

And it happened that as they were talking together and discussing it, Jesus himself came up and walked by their side; but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him.

He said to them, “What are all these things that you are discussing as you walk along?” They stopped, their faces downcast.

Then one of them, called Cleopas, answered him, :You must be the only person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days.”

He asked, “What things?” They answered, “All about Jesus of Nazareth, who showed himself a prophet powerful in action and speech before God and the whole people; and how our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and had him crucified.

“Our own hope had been that he would be the one to set Israel free. And this is not all: two whole days have now gone by since it all happened; and some women from our group have astounded us: they went to the tomb in the early morning, and when they could not find the body, they came back to tell us they had seen a vision of angels who declared he was alive. Some of our friends went to the tomb and found everything exactly as the women had reported, but of him they saw nothing.”

Then he said to them, “You foolish ones! So slow to believe all that the prophets have said! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer before entering into his glory?” Then, starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, he explained to them the passages throughout the scriptures that were about himself.

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS (Jim De Quattro)**

[Pause after the reading.]

What is the road like that you are now traveling? Are you with someone or alone?

[Pause.]

What are you discussing as you walk along? Would Jesus say, “Oh, you foolish ones!”?

[Pause.]

Jesus used prophecies to help the two disciples make sense of their fears. What context do you use to make sense of what is happening right now?

**SILENCE (2 minutes, ending with a chime) (Betty)**

**GOSPEL 2 – (Mia or Tim Brown)**

[When the chime sounds, pause before reading.]

When they drew near to the village to which they were going, he made as if to go on; but they pressed him to stay with them saying, “It is nearly evening, and the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them.

Now while he was with them at table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him; but he had vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?”

They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven assembled together with their companions, who said to them, “The Lord has indeed risen and has appeared to Simon.” Then they told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognized him at the breaking of bread.

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS (Jim De Quattro)**

What makes food, the sharing of a meal, significant? [Pause.]

How do you recognize Christ in a way that’s unfamiliar or unexpected? Is there something that tips you off? [Pause.]

When does your heart burn within you?

**SILENCE (2 minutes, ending with a chime) (Betty will do he chime.)**

[Pause.] **Suzie**: Now Joan Sklamm will share part of an Emmaus homily by Mary Novak. Mary is the founding chair of the Catholic Mobilizing Network, a chaplain at Georgetown University, and part of Solidarity with Sisters.

**REFLECTION (Joan)**

Can you imagine what it must have been like for these two disciples on the road to Emmaus? Their friend had just been tortured and executed.   And not just any friend; this was the man they thought was their Anointed One, the one for whom their religious community had been preparing for generations.

What do they do?  They are getting out of town. In this state of spiritual desolation, the disciples turn in on themselves and their perspective narrows.  This is also a real human response to crisis.

So what does Jesus do as he joins them?   He focuses on their harm.  He enters into their pain in a way that invites them to share deeply, because what is not named cannot be healed.  Jesus listens to their specific pain, pain that is different from the pain of others.

Only then does Jesus begin the delicate process of putting the disciples’ story within the context of the wider story told in Scripture.  This is brought more fully into their conscious imagination when they come together in the breaking of the bread, finally seeing Jesus and healing enough to find their way back to community.

In our journey of discipleship, we too may walk away.  But somewhere on that road, as we walk away from our pain, Christ will appear, in a new guise, and we will be unable initially to recognize him.

What we can find on our own road to Emmaus is a deeper vision and meaning of God, Christ, and our faith community.

What can we do besides turn away and run?   We can walk alongside one another and listen deeply, restoratively.   As we listen, we feel the healing love of Christ in our midst, holding each other’s grief and harm. Slowly, the desolation can turn, widening our perspective.  We may even experience a sense that our hearts are burning as we listen to each other.  From this encounter, we might even begin to trust that a way forward will emerge as it did for the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS (Jim De Quattro)**

What glaring facts in our world do you resist recognizing and stopping to look at? What do you do with the uncomfortable feelings that arise as you do see these things?

How are you called to heal the world?

**SILENCE (2 minutes, ending with a chime) (Betty)**

**SHARING (Suzie)**

In just a moment, I will invite you to share your reflections. Each individual reflection lets us all glimpse the many ways in which God is here among us.

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)

Suzie:

Thank you.

**Betty:**

Now Ann Jelen will lead us in prayer.

**INTENTION (Ann Jelen)**

We may have been avoiding some difficult truth, or even going in the opposite direction. The Emmaus story urges us to find among ourselves a community that’s willing to take risks and to trust God together, for the good of the world. So let us pray. Our response will be, “Holy One, hear our prayer.”

God within us, be at work in us so that we hold nothing back in becoming your Easter people. For this we pray. Holy One, hear our prayer.

God among us, give us the courage to risk what we are accustomed to, so that we build a society 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, help us to recognize you during this pandemic in the endless ways you are present – in suffering, in goodness, in creativity, in truth, in ourselves, and in Earth. For this we pray. Holy One, hear our prayer.

The leaders of Catholic sisters are striving to support their congregations while continuing their service to others in this unprecedented time. For all of them, and especially for the staff of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, we pray. Holy One, hear our prayer.

Now 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.”

(People speak.)

**Ann:** 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 (Betty)**

Like the early Christian community,

let’s keep ourselves open to the future emerging among us today.

Like the early church, let’s praise God and break bread together.

And so we 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 (Betty)**

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 (Betty)**

Let us now go forth in peace:

in communion with each other

and offering communion to a hungry world. Amen.

Reggie Ott will lead us in our own Emmaus song. If you don’t know it, it’s very easy to pick up. The lyrics are, for the first verse: We are marching in the light of God! And in the second verse, We are living in the love of God!

**CLOSING SONG:** **“We Are Walking” (South African) -- Reggie**

We are marching in the light of God,
We are marching in the light of God!

We are marching in the light of God,
We are marching in the light of God!

We are marching marching…
We are marching Oh Oh…
We are marching in the light of God!

We are marching marching,,,
We are marching Oh Oh…
We are marching in the light of God!

We are living in the love of God,
We are living in the love of God!

We are living in the love of God,
We are living in the love of God!

We are living living…
We are living Oh Oh…
We are living in the love of God!

We are living living…
We are living Oh Oh…
We are living in the love of God!