

SOLIDARITY WITH SISTERS' SUNDAY SERVICE – MAY 17, 2020

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

WELCOME (Suzie De Quattro)

Welcome, everyone!

- Introductions – people who haven’t been here before? Phil Gallagher and Ann Neale in Columbia, Lynn’s father Norbert Bufka in Michigan
- Much gratitude for Ann Jelen and Bob Gallagher, who have prepared our celebration today.
- Thanks for Stu Sklamm and Reggie Ott, who will lead us in music.][As it turned out, both had technical issues. Thanks to Gail De George and Marilyn Voigt for last-minute leadership!
- Thanks to our readers today – Ann Neale, Jim De Quattro, Mary Ott, and Mia and Tim Brown. If you’d like to read on future Sundays, please get in touch.

SETTLING IN (Suzie De Quattro)

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 filling you as inhale, and tensions leaving as you exhale. And now let’s take 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 – GATHER US IN (Stu Sklamm)

GREETING (Bob Gallagher)

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

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

CALL TO WORSHIP (Bob Gallagher)

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, our time together this morning will be radiant with the light of Christ. Amen.

(Pause.)

GATHERING PRAYER (Bob Gallagher)

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.
Amen.

INTRODUCTION TO THEME (Ann Jelen)

In these readings for the Sixth Sunday of Easter, we enter a time of questioning, of transforming, of becoming. In the gospel, Jesus is still at table with the disciples. He has been preparing them for his death and what they can expect afterward as he moves from physical presence to spiritual presence. Jesus explains to the disciples that they won't be alone and that they must now live in a new relationship with Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit (or Advocate, which means "helper"). The commandments to love God and neighbor will provide the avenue for this new relationship. The disciples will not be abandoned; they will see Jesus while the world will no longer see him. This transformative preparation will help the disciples realize that they will live in union as Jesus says "I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you." They are going to become one in the Spirit, one in the Lord.

Now Tim and Mia Brown will read the Gospel of John, chapter 14, verses 15 to 21, in two parts. After each reading, we will offer questions before we pause for silent reflection. Don't feel you have to answer all questions. To stay with one of them might lead you into a deeper place.

READING 1 -- FROM THE 14th CHAPTER OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN (Tim or Mia Brown)

From the 14th chapter of the Gospel of John:

Jesus said to his disciples:
"If you love me, you will keep my commandments.
And I will ask the Father,
and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always,
the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept,
because it neither sees nor knows him.
But you know him, because he remains with you
and will be in you."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS (Jim DeQuattro)

1. Jesus says, "If you love me you will keep my commandments." The statement assumes that his listeners know his "commandments" since he has been with them for the last three years.

After two thousand years, how do we reconcile these two terms: commandments and love?

2. Jesus says that the Father "...will give you another Advocate to be with you always." His listeners thought that they understood how to love Jesus in person and may wonder why or how another will be with them always.

How do you recognize or see the Spirit of Truth who, Jesus has promised, is acting in your life?

SILENCE (Sound a chime after 2:00 minutes.) **(Betty Thompson)**

READING 2 – CONTINUING FROM THE 14TH CHAPTER OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: (Mia or Tim Brown)

We continue with the 14th chapter of the Gospel of John:

“I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.
In a little while the world will no longer see me,
but you will see me, because I live and you will live.
On that day you will realize that I am in my Father
and you are in me and I in you.
Whoever has my commandments and observes them
is the one who loves me.
And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father,
and I will love him and reveal myself to him.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS (Jim De Quattro)

1. The listeners at the table may slowly realize that Jesus is somehow leaving when he uses the word “orphan.” They might feel confused and sad.

How have you felt during the times when the Advocate, the Spirit of Truth, seemed absent in your life? What gave you hope?

2. Jesus says, “Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him.”

What is so challenging about the loving relationship that Jesus proposes here?

SILENCE (Sound a chime after 2:00.) (Betty Thompson)

READING 3 – REFLECTION BY SR. MARY ANN HINSDALE, IHM (Ann Neale)

From today’s homily by Sister Mary Ann Hinsdale on the website Catholic Women Preach:

In the passage assigned for today, Jesus reminds us that, if we love him, we will keep his commandments. That saying immediately brings to mind the “New Commandment” that Jesus gave to his disciples at their last meal together: we are to love one another, as Jesus has loved us. And it was in the act of footwashing, Jesus gave us the example of how to do this: we are to serve one

another, humbly, even to the point of relinquishing that which is most dear to us: our reputation, our status, and ultimately, as Jesus himself did, our very lives.

Today, we who find ourselves among the privileged, often hear that we are losing “a way of life” that we have come to take for granted: going out to dinner, seeing movies in theaters, face-to-face learning in classrooms, even receiving holy communion. We are sobered by the possibility that, even if these activities eventually can be resumed, until a vaccine can be developed, our very lives may be at stake. Of course, such life-threatening situations have long been familiar to the poor, to refugees, to those living in war-torn areas, to victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence, or anyone who has ever been excluded on the basis of race, gender, or sexual orientation. The virus has become “the great leveler”; it does not discriminate. And yet, this daunting reminder of what it means to be a follower of Jesus need not leave us in despair. For Jesus promises that “he will not leave us orphans.” He will ask the Father, his Abba God, to give us an “advocate,” a Spirit of truth, who will be with us always... In John’s Gospel, however, this Counselor/Advocate represents both the presence and activity of God and the continuing presence of Jesus in the community... As we look toward Pentecost in just a few weeks, as we ponder how to give an account for our hope, that we will not be left orphans: let us remember that we have already been given the gift of the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit who is urging us on saying: ..“ I am by your side, I am right with you, I will not let you fail!”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS (Jim De Quattro)

1. How do we witness the continuing “presence of Jesus in the community” in the “foot washing” that you have observed in recent months?
2. How do you react to the words that “our very lives may be at stake?”

SILENCE (Sound a chime after 2:00 minutes.) **(Betty Thompson)**

SHARING (Suzie De Quattro)

I invite you to share your reflections. Everyone’s individual reflections help us to glimpse the many ways God is 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)

Thank you. (If the leader of this part can come up with two or three words on the spot to express the essence, you mention that. No pressure to do that.)

Now Mary will lead us in prayer.

INTENTION (Mary Ott)

The Hope that abounds in these readings applies readily to our current health crisis. The Advocate frees us from fear and loneliness to become something new. The virus has freed us to learn about hope, reminding us that God remains with us and in us, and is revealed to us by the countless acts of caregiving, ingenuity and trust all around. So let us pray.

Our response will be, **Holy One, hear our prayer.**

Spirit of Truth, thank you for living and loving in us and through us, help us be confident of your presence everyday, for this we pray. **Holy One, hear our prayer.**

Spirit of Truth, may all that we do flow from our deep connection with you and all beings, for this we pray. **Holy One, hear our prayer.**

Advocate, help us become a community that vulnerably shares each other's burdens and joys. For this we pray. **Holy One, hear our prayer.**

Advocate, listen to our hearts' longings for the healing of our world. For this we pray. **Holy One, hear our prayer.**

Advocate, may the leaders of the Catholic Sisters, especially LCWR, be strengthened by your presence as they support their congregations who continue their works of love in this unprecedented time. For this we pray. **Holy One, hear our prayer.**

Now for what else shall we pray? Please unmute yourselves as you speak. Please end your petition with “for this we pray.”

(People speak. When you sense that people are finished, continue to the next Amen.)

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

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 Thompson)

God of Love,
just as in the early Christian community,
your future is eager to be born in us now.
You nourish us for this work as we 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.]

We thank you, O God, for your blessings
and for sharing your own life with us.
Amen.

OUR FATHER (Betty Thompson)

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 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 (Ann Jelen)

Let us go forth recalling the words of Teresa of Avila:

Christ has no body now but yours.
No hands, no feet on earth but yours.
Yours are the eyes through which he looks with compassion on this world.
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good.
Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.
Amen.

Let us go forth blessed by the words of Teresa of Avila.

CLOSING SONG: They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love (Reggie)

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,
And we pray that our unity will one day be restored,
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
Yeah they'll know we are Christians by our love!

We will work with each other, we will work side by side,
We will work with each other, we will work side by side,

And we'll guard each one's dignity and save each one's pride,
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
Yeah, they'll know we are Christians by our love.