**Solidarity with Sisters Communal Prayer for Easter to Pentecost**

**May 9, 2021 - Mother’s Day**

*“I see that God shows no partiality.” Acts 10:34*

***HELLOS and then Betty mutes everyone.***

***WELCOME (Lynn Bufka)***

Welcome, everyone!

* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?
* My father and I prepared today’s communal prayer and we thank Claire Fernandes and Reggie Ott for making our music and to Betty for keeping us technical.
* Thanks to the people who will be reading and leading us in prayer today: Mary Fernandes, Cecilia Estrada, Debbie Ballard, Kathy Linaberry, Bill and Kathy Cavanaugh, Judy Sholes, Peg Duchesne and Sylvia Lynch.
* If you’d like to read on future Sundays, please get in touch.

***SETTLING IN (Lynn Bufka)***

Let’s quiet ourselves so we can be attentive to what God hopes for us today. Notice your breath as it goes in and out…. Let it slow and deepen… and slowly fill you with the peace of Christ. We begin with 3 deep breaths. One to be here… one to be together… and one to welcome in the Spirit who never leaves us.

Now Reggie Ott will lead us into our prayer together.

***OPENING SONG - “Sing a New Song” by Dan Schutte (Reggie Ott)***

Refrain: Sing a new song unto the Lord;

let your song be sung from mountains high!

Sing a new song unto the Lord, singing alleluia!

V1 Yahweh’s people dance for joy.

O come before the Lord!

And play for him on glad tambourines,

and let your trumpet sound!

V2 Rise, O children, from your sleep;

your Savior now has come.

He has turned your sorrow to joy,

and filled your soul with song.

V3 Glad my soul for I have seen

the glory of the Lord.

The trumpet sounds; the dead shall be raised.

I know my Savior lives!

***GREETING (Lynn Bufka)***

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

All: Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia! Alleluia!

***CALL TO WORSHIP (Judy Sholes)***

We moved from Lenten darkness into Easter light. Teach us how to live in that light every day and share that light with others, especially those who remain in darkness. Teach us to challenge each other to live in that light together. Your light guides me and my light guides you. Together we can make abundant light for the world.

And so, let us pray:

***GATHERING PRAYER (Judy Sholes)***

Now let us pray with the early Christians, in the words of St. Hippolytus of Rome:

Christ is risen: The world below lies desolate.

Christ is risen: The spirits of evil are fallen.

Christ is risen: The angels of God are rejoicing.

Christ is risen: The tombs of the dead are empty.

Christ is risen indeed from the dead, the first of the sleepers! Glory and Power are His for ever and ever! Amen.

Kathy Linaberry will now introduce us to today’s theme.

***INTRODUCTION TO THEME (Kathy Linaberry)***

Today, Mother’s Day, many of us are acutely aware of the love our mothers had for us and the love we have seen in the mothers around us. Often, a mother’s love is our first experience of love. Our human experiences of love help us to glimpse and to share what it is to love as God loves.

Love is a constant theme in the Bible. When Jesus was asked what is the greatest commandment, he quoted Deuteronomy in saying “love God above all else” and then quoted Leviticus in saying “love your neighbor as yourself.” In Acts, a growing community of both Jews and Gentiles were together and Peter saw the Spirit of God on all who were gathered. On this day, the community began to understand that God dwells in all people and Baptism seals recognition of this presence. Every day, we are called to recognize the in-dwelling of God in all people and to love in response.

In today’s Gospel, we get a glimpse of what this love means when Jesus commands his disciples to love as he has loved- to even be willing to lay down one’s life for a friend. This does not necessarily mean to die for another but it does mean to always do what is best for another even when that is hard. John tells us that love is the very essence and presence of God for God is love. As we first learned to love as children, we are continually called to love as freely and completely as God loves. (Slight pause)

Now Kathy Cavanaugh will read from chapter 10 of the Book of Acts and Bill Cavanaugh will ask our reflection questions.

***READING 1 - Acts 10: 34-35, 44-48 (Kathy Cavanaugh)***

Peter proceeded to speak and said, “In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him.” While Peter was still speaking these things, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the word.

The circumcised believers who had accompanied Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit should have been poured out on the Gentiles also, for they could hear them speaking in tongues and glorifying God. Then Peter responded, “Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit even as we have?”

He ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

***REFLECTION QUESTIONS (Bill Cavanaugh)***

When have you witnessed the Holy Spirit in people outside your own group?

If people already have the Holy Spirit, what is the meaning of baptism? What is the meaning of your baptism?

***SILENT REFLECTION (Betty:*** Share slide w/questions, time 2:00, chime, stop slide.)

***Bill Cavanaugh:*** Now (we’ll email you more info , Bill) will sing a hymn based on the Psalm readings for today.

***PSALM – “All the Ends of the Earth” by Bub Dufford***

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.

V1 - Break into song at the deeds of the Lord, the wonders God has done in every age.

V2 - Heaven and earth shall rejoice in his might; every heart, every nation call him Lord.

***Lynn Bufka:*** Debbie Ballard will read from the first letter of John.

***READING 2 - 1 Jn 4:7-10,12 (Debbie Ballard)***

Beloved, let us love one another,

because love is of God;

everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God.

Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love.

In this way the love of God was revealed to us:

God sent his only Son into the world

so that we might have life through him.

In this is love:

not that we have loved God, but that he loved us

and sent his Son as expiation for our sins.

No one has ever seen God; but as long as we love one another

God will live in us and God’s love will be complete in us.

*(Slight pause)*

***REFLECTION QUESTIONS (Bill Cavanaugh)***

The word LOVE can mean so many different things.  How does love animate or transform you?

How can you affirm the love of God when you experience it in others?

***SILENT REFLECTION (Betty:*** Share slide w/questions, time 2:00, chime, stop slide.)

**Bill Cavanaugh:** Now Mary Fernandes will read from chapter 15 of the Gospel of John.

***READING 3 – John 15:9-17 (Mary Fernandes)***

Jesus said to his disciples:

“As the Father loves me, so I also love you.

Remain in my love.

If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love,

just as I have kept my Father’s commandments

and remain in his love.

“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you

and your joy might be complete.

This is my commandment: love one another as I love you.

No one has greater love than this,

to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

You are my friends if you do what I command you.

I no longer call you slaves,

because a slave does not know what his master is doing.

I have called you friends,

because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father.

It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you

and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain,

so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you.

This I command you: love one another.”

*(Slight pause)*

***REFLECTION QUESTIONS (Bill Cavanaugh)***

When have you been willing and when have you resisted laying down your life for others?

When you examine how well you are “loving as Jesus did,” what are you looking for?

***SILENT REFLECTION (Betty***: Share slide w/questions, time 2:00, chime, stop slide.)

**Betty:** Richard McGinnis will now lead our sharing.

***SHARING (Richard McGinnis)***

We invite you to briefly share what emerged in your heart this morning as you have reflected upon our reading and music. We welcome everyone who wants to speak, and we also know that the wisdom of this community includes both words shared and silent listening,

So let’s begin in silence as we gather our reflections. *[Long-ish pause]*

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

[Sharing]

[If there is silence more than about 30 seconds before anyone speaks:] Take whatever quiet you need before you speak.

[If there is extended silence during the sharing:] Is there anyone else who would like to share?  *[Pause.]*

[Stop by about 11:20.]

Thank you.

Now Peg Duchesne will lead us in prayer.

***PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY (Peg Duchesne)***

We know God loves us and all creation. And so with confidence we offer our prayers. As we begin, let’s pause to notice the prayers that rise in us now. (Pause) Our response will be: Loving God, hear our prayer.

Guide us in our efforts to love as you love us. For this we pray. Loving God, hear our prayer.

God among us, animate the Leadership Conference of Women Religious as they ask not simply what they are to do for your kingdom, but how they are to be your love. For this we pray. Loving God, hear our prayer.

Help us to make courageous choices in solidarity with people who are marginalized, unheard, and vulnerable, and with your whole creation. For this we pray. Loving God, hear our prayer.

On this Mother’s Day, we recognize all grandmothers, mothers, mothers to be, and mother figures for their devotion to their children. For this we pray, Loving God, hear our prayer.

For people in government, that they serve from a position of love in all their actions and policies, for this we pray. Loving God, hear our prayer.

For what else shall we pray? Please unmute yourself to speak, and mute yourself afterwards.

(Shared prayers)

Loving God, we place all of 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 (Cecilia Estrada)***

In this Easter season, we celebrate the amazing gift of Christ among us. What does it mean to offer yourself to God in gratitude? In the bright light of Easter, what call do you see for yourself this week? *[Pause.]*

Let us pray. Generous God, Creative Spirit, we commit to sharing our time, talents, and treasures so that we may be a light and a witness to the transforming love of Jesus Christ. Amen.

***CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION (Lynn or Betty)***

O Great Love, we are humbled and emboldened

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

We are part of that body as we let go of all that separates us from you,

and as we embrace one another and your entire creation with merciful love.

We remember the night before Jesus died.

At dinner with friends, Jesus knew all that would soon be asked of them,

and, loving them to the end, Jesus showed them how to care for each other

as they went out into the world.

First Jesus washed their feet

and said, “… as I have done for you, you should also do.”

Then he looked at what was in front of them, the bread and the cup,

gifts of the earth and work of human hands, and blessed them.

So let us, too, invite God into ourselves so that we become God’s living presence in our world. *[Pause.]*

Holy One, you transform us as you nourish us here.

May we nourish others with your presence.

Amen.

***OUR FATHER (Norbert Bufka)***

Now let us join our hearts as if we could join our hands to pray in harmony with Christians throughout the world in the words that Jesus gave us:

All (muted): 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,

and 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 (Sylvia Lynch)***

Filled with the presence of God and bathed in transformative love, may we go forth viewing creation with divine eyes and sharing with an imperfect people who yearn for love and the experience of God’s healing peace. May we grow God’s kingdom and offer communion and kindness to a hungry world.  Amen. *(Pause)*

Now Reggie Ott will lead us in a new song, Lord of All Nations, Grant Me Grace.

***CLOSING – Lord of All Nations, Grant Me Grace (Reggie Ott)***

[If you want to get familiar ahead of time - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWxgTlX9QJM>)

Lord of all nations, grant me grace

To love all people, every race,

To see each mortal as I ought,

My kindred whom your love has bought.

Break down the wall that would divide

Your children, Lord, on every side.

My neighbor's good let me pursue.

Let Christian love bind warm and true.

With your own love may I be filled

And by your Holy Spirit willed

That all whose lives are touched by mine

May know your healing touch divine.

***RESOURCES***

Gathering prayer: Saint Hippolytus of Rome

<https://www.womansday.com/life/g26399295/easter-prayers/>

The story behind the closing hymn:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3UCVnr5758k>