**Solidarity with Sisters Communal Prayer for Sunday, August 8, 2021**

***“I am the living bread.”***

**HELLOs** and then Betty mutes everyone.

**WELCOME (Betty Thompson)**

Welcome, everyone!

* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?
* Thanks to Mary Ott who prepared this communal prayer.
* Thanks to Reggie Ott for our music.
* Thanks to the people who will be reading and leading us in prayer today: Judy Sholes, Peggy Thompson, Richard McGinnis, Alicia Urban, Ann Jelen, Lynn Bufka, Sister Jo’Ann De Quattro, Sister Marie McCarthy and George Urban
* If you’d like to read on future Sundays, please get in touch.

**SETTLING IN (Betty Thompson)**

Let your breath bring you into quiet so you can be attentive to each other and to the Spirit. 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 know the Spirit who never leaves us.

Now Reggie Ott will lead us into our celebration.

**OPENING** – **Taste and See** **(Reggie Ott )**

Refrain:

Taste and see, taste and see  
the goodness of the Lord.  
O taste and see, taste and see  
the goodness of the Lord, of the Lord.

I will bless the Lord at all times.  
Praise shall always be on my lips;  
my soul shall glory in the Lord  
for God has been so good to me. (Refrain)  
  
Glorify the Lord with me.  
Together let us all praise God's name.  
I called the Lord who answered me;  
from all my troubles I was set free. (Refrain)  
  
Worship the Lord, all you people.  
You'll want for nothing if you ask.  
Taste and see that the Lord is good;  
in God we need put all our trust. (Refrain)

**GREETING** **(Judy Sholes)**

Beloved Community, rejoice! The Spirit of Christ is alive in us! Alleluia! Alleluia!

All: Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Alleluia!

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

We remember how the Spirit of our loving God poured into the disciples and enabled them to share the good news in ways that everyone could understand, across all divisions. Today we hope for the same experience: for joy in the Spirit, and for capacity to share the Gospel. We believe that the Spirit will give us light for our next step. And now let us pray.

**GATHERING PRAYER** **(Betty Thompson)**

O God, we come together today because it is with each other that we experience ourselves as the people of God and the body of Christ. We celebrate the great fact that you are in love with us. We want to live that love. Together we seek light for our next step. And let all your children say Amen.

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME** **(Mary Ott)**

Our opening song today is based on Psalm 34--a thanksgiving to the Lord who delivered the psalmist from his fears, from all distress. The word “taste” previews Jesus’ assertion that he is the bread of life. The readings for today from the First Book of Kings and John’s Gospel both refer to the life-giving importance of bread, one for the sustenance of physical life, and the other for spiritual life.

Why did Elijah flee into the desert? Israel’s king Ahab had married Jezebel and converted to the worship of Baal. The prophet Elijah told Ahab that there would be a drought that would not end except at Elijah’s words. Elijah left the area, not returning until more than two years of drought had ensued. When Elijah returned, he set up a contest between the Lord and the god Baal. When the Lord won the contest, Elijah killed the 450 prophets of Baal. Then Jezebel threatened to kill Elijah. The first reading describes Elijah’s flight. *(Slight pause.)*

Now Peggy Thompson will read from the First Book of Kings, chapter 19, verses 4 to 8, followed by questions and silence for reflection. Feel free to stay with whatever question calls you.

**READING 1** **(Peggy Thompson )**

Elijah went a day’s journey into the desert,

until he came to a broom tree and sat beneath it.

He prayed for death saying:

“This is enough, O LORD!

Take my life, for I am no better than my fathers.”

He lay down and fell asleep under the broom tree,

but then an angel touched him and ordered him to get up and eat.

Elijah looked and there at his head was a hearth cake

and a jug of water.

After he ate and drank, he lay down again,

but the angel of the LORD came back a second time,

touched him, and ordered,

“Get up and eat, else the journey will be too long for you!”

He got up, ate, and drank;

Then, strengthened by that food,

he walked forty days and forty nights to the mountain of God, Horeb.

**QUESTIONS / PROMPTS 1**  **(Richard McGinnis)**

Elijah sat down by a broom tree that shaded him from the desert sun. What protects you from the trials in your life?

What is the bread of life that sustains you at your most desperate moments?

When have you been touched by an angel who recognized your needs? How did that feel?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE** (Betty: Share slide 1, time 2:30, chime, stop slide.)

**(Mary Ott)** As Sr. Mary M. McClone writes, “In today’s Gospel, John gives us a classic example of people’s misperception of Jesus and his message. When Jesus said, ‘I am the bread come down from heaven,’ he was calling on his people’s religious memory, proclaiming that he was God’s sign of love and providence for them. Interestingly, they understood him well enough that they didn’t label him a crazy person claiming to be bread, but they lost it over the idea that he claimed to be sent by God. They were unshakably convinced that nobody they knew, nobody with origins as humble as his, could have been sent to them by God.”

Now Alicia Urban will read verses 41 to 45 and 47 to 51 from the 6th chapter of the Gospel of John.

**READING 2 (Alicia Urban)**

The Jews murmured about Jesus because he said,

“I am the bread that came down from heaven,”

and they said,

“Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph?

Do we not know his father and mother?

Then how can he say,

‘I have come down from heaven’?”

Jesus answered and said to them,

“Stop murmuring among yourselves.

No one can come to me unless drawn in by the father who sent me,

and I will raise that person up on the last day.

It is written in the prophets:

*They shall all be taught by God.*

Everyone who listens to my Father and learns from him comes to me.

Amen, amen, I say to you,

whoever believes has eternal life.

I am the bread of life.

Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died;

this is the bread that comes down from heaven

so that one may eat it and not die.

I am the living bread that came down from heaven;

whoever eats this bread will live forever;

and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.”

**QUESTIONS 2 (Richard McGinnis)**

Whose holiness have you overlooked because they were familiar?

Reflect on Jesus saying: “I am the bread of life.” What image or feeling comes into your heart?

How have you experienced Jesus as the bread of life?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE** (Betty: Share slide 2, time 2:30, chime, stop slide.)

(**Mary Ott**) Ann Jelen will now lead our sharing.

**SHARING (Ann Jelen)**

We invite you to briefly share what emerged in your heart this morning as you listened and as you reflected on these readings. That helps us to glimpse the many ways God is among us. We welcome new voices, 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 pause.)*

Please unmute yourself to speak, and mute again afterwards. Who would like to begin our sharing?

*(Sharing.)*

Thank you. Now Lynn Bufka will lead us in prayer.

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY (Lynn Bufka)**

We know that God alone is enough for us. So now we bring what is in our hearts to God. Our response will be: Loving God, hear our prayer.

God of graciousness, we thank you for the gifts we have received. Loving God, hear our prayer.

God of life, give us the bread of life. Loving God, hear our prayer.

God of generosity, enable us to feed the hungry. Loving God, hear our prayer.

God of empathy, help us support those who are discouraged. Loving God, hear our prayer.

God of wisdom, inspire the work of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious as they conduct their Assembly this week. Loving God, 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 remember to unmute yourself.

*(People speak.)*

Thank you. O God, we give you all our prayers, spoken and unspoken. We will do all that we can to put our prayers into action – while entrusting the outcome to you. Amen.

**OFFERTORY (Jo’Ann De Quattro)**

In these months after Pentecost, we celebrate the amazing fact that the Spirit of God lives in us now and at every moment. What does it mean to offer yourself to God in gratitude? Is there an old or new call that you will commit to 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 (Marie McCarthy)**

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 give you thanks for your presence in and among us. *(Pause.)*

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 right now into what is front and center in our lives

knowing that God will indeed enter what we offer – and bless it. *(Pause.)*

Holy One, make us your bread of abundance. Make us your wine of joy.

Let even our fragments be plenty to share.

Amen.

**OUR FATHER (George Urban)**

Now let us join our hearts to pray with all who seek peace and justice throughout the world:

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 (Mary Ott)**

Filled with the presence of God, may we grow God’s kingdom and offer communion and kindness to a hungry world.  Amen.

Now we will close with the song “One Bread, One Body.”

**CLOSING – One Bread, One Body (Reggie Ott)**

Chorus:

One bread, one body  
One Lord of all  
One cup of blessing which we bless  
And we, though many  
Throughout the earth  
We are one body in this one Lord

Grain for the fields  
Scattered and grown  
Gathered to one, for all  
  
Chorus:

One bread, one body  
One Lord of all  
One cup of blessing which we bless  
And we, though many  
Throughout the earth  
We are one body in this one Lord

**Resources**

James E. Moore, Jr., “Taste and See” (1983).

Photo of broom tree: tree.jpg from Knitpurlpraypreach.blogspot.com/2016/06/a-broom-tree-week-sermon-for-Sunday-19.html.

St. Joseph Sr. Mary M. McGlone, July 12, 2021: Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, National Catholic Reporter (<https://www.ncronline.org/sunday-resource/august-8-2021-nineteenth-sunday-ordinary-time>).

Photo of bread by Mary D. Ott.

John Michael Talbot, “One Bread, One Body,” genius.com/John-michael-talbot-one-bread-one-body-lyrics.