**Solidarity with Sisters Communal Prayer, October 3, 2021**

**27th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

“*And God said, “It is good.” (Genesis 1)*

**HELLOs** and then Betty mutes everyone. **(Suzie De Quattro and Betty Thompson)**

**WELCOME  (Suzie De Quattro)**

Welcome, everyone!

* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?
* Betty and I had the pleasure of preparing for this Sunday.
* Thanks to Reggie Ott for our music.
* Thanks to the people who will be reading and leading us in prayer today:  Donna Ellerman, Peg Duchesne, Jim De Quattro, Arlene McGarrity, Sr. Grace Hartzog, Kathy and Bill Cavanaugh, Kathleen Cross, Kate Monagan, and Pat and Greg Campbell.
* If you’d like to read on future Sundays, please get in touch.

**SETTLING IN (Betty)**

In a minute we’ll sing our hope to “sing a new church into being.” In our hope to be the body of Christ, let’s begin by being in our own bodies. Loosen your shoulders. You’re your feet on the floor. Feel your breath entering you… filling you deeper with each breath… flowing out into the world… connecting with the breath of every living being on this earth. Let’s let our breath celebrate that we are here…. That we are together… and that the Spirit moves in us with every breath. *(Pause)*

So let’s sing with Reggie Ott.

**OPENING  SONG – “SING A NEW CHURCH” by Delores Dufner OSB (Reggie Ott)**

1. Summoned by the God who made us  
   rich in our diversity  
   Gathered in the name of Jesus,  
   richer still in unity.

Refrain: Let us bring the gifts that differ  
and, in splendid, varied ways,  
sing a new Church into being,  
one in faith and love and praise.

3. Trust the goodness of creation;  
trust the Spirit strong within.  
Dare to dream the vision promised,  
sprung from seed of what has been. Refrain

5. Draw together at one table,  
all the human family;  
shape a circle ever wider  
and a people ever free. Refrain

**GREETING / CALL TO WORSHIP (Donna Ellerman)**

Beloved Community, together we treasure the immense gift of divine love. Alleluia, alleluia!

**All:** Thanks be to God!  Alleluia!  Alleluia!

**GATHERING PRAYER (Donna Ellerman)**

O gracious mystery that we name God,

Keep us ready to

leave “the warmth of what was safe and comfortable

out past the … walls of what was

‘enough’ and ‘reasonable,’ away beyond

the security of the familiar,

tried and proven.”

Let us “catch a glimpse of the

Divine delight in reversing human logic –

in drawing power from weakness,

wisdom from folly,

life from death.

In this [will be our] strength.” Amen.

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME  (Suzie De Quattro)**

Last Sunday’s readings and questions challenged us to consider what it’s like to be prophets, people whose lives and words express truth with love. This week’s readings ask us to take a prophetic look at relationships.

We start with the creation of humans made in God’s own image. God shares with them the divine vision of how humans relate to the earth and all its inhabitants.  “It is good,” God says.  “It is good.”  Ponder this passage in light of last week’s question~~,~~ “What changes in your lifestyle feel urgent for Earth, and really hard for you to do?”  *[Pause]*

Mark’s gospel takes us into relationships among humans.  We recently heard the disciples arguing over who was the greatest among them. Now we will hear the disciples try to prevent children from “bothering” Jesus, and Jesus welcoming them. The reign of God does not distinguish between “important” people like the disciples and those who could be easily dismissed like children.

The humble, generous love of Jesus is pretty much the opposite of our stereotype of prophetic proclamation.  But look how Jesus takes visible action that contrasts with people's norms and expectations.  And then offers a crisp statement about why.  Prophecy can be that simple.  And that strategic.  If we do it with the mind of Jesus.

What would it mean for our community to put on the mind of God in our relationships?  How can we, like children, joyfully, playfully answer this prophetic call?

*(Slight pause)*

Now Peg Duchesne will read from the 1st chapter of the Book of Genesis. Then Jim De Quattro will offer questions and silence for reflection.  Feel free to stay with whatever question calls you.

**READING 1** [**Genesis 1:26-31**](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/exodus/16?2)  **(Peg Duchesne)**

God said, 'Let us make humankind in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves. Let them be stewards of the fish of the sea, the birds of air, the cattle, all the wild animals and everything that crawls on the ground.'

God created humans as God’s reflection; in the divine image of God they were created, male and female God made them.

God blessed them, saying to them, 'Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and be responsible for it. Watch over the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven and all the living creatures that move on earth.'

God also said, 'Look, to you I give all the seed-bearing plants everywhere on the earth, and all the trees with seed-bearing fruit; this will be your food. And to all the animals of the earth, all the birds of air and all the things that crawl on the ground, everything that has a living soul in it I give all the green plants as food.' And so it was.

God looked at all of creation, and proclaimed, “It is good,” indeed it was very good. Evening came and morning followed: the sixth day."

*(Slight pause)*

**QUESTIONS 1** *(Pause after each question.)* **(Jim De Quattro)**

Ponder how life feels if you begin with God’s words: “Indeed it is very good” and “everything…has a living soul in it.”

When is it easy for you to see yourself and others as “the image and likeness of God?” When is it difficult?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE**     **(Betty:** Share slide 1, time 2:00, chime, stop slide.**)**

Betty:  Now Arlene McGarrity will read from the 10th chapter of the Gospel of Mark.

**READING 2**:  Mark 10:13-16 **(Arlene McGarrity)**

People were bringing children to Jesus that he might touch them,  
but the disciples scolded them.  
When Jesus saw this, he became indignant and said to them,  
"Let the children come to me;  
do not prevent them, for the reign of God belongs to  
such as these.   
This truth I tell you,  
whoever does not accept the reign of God like a child  
will not enter it."  
Then Jesus took the children into his arms and blessed them,

laying his hands on them.

*(Slight pause)*

**QUESTIONS 2** *(Pause after each question.)* **(Jim De Quattro)**

Feel Jesus hands upon you. How are you being blessed at this moment?

Rest in God’s unconditional love. How do you feel?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE**    **(Betty:** Share slide 2, time 2:00, chime, stop slide.**)**

**Betty:**  Now Sister Grace Hartzog will share a reflection from the words of Sr. Mary McGlone, Karoline Lewis, and Sara Attwood Otto.

**READING 3:**  **(Grace Hartzog)**

Genesis tells us that human beings were created to be recipients and images of God’s ongoing, free loving. Jesus lived to show us how to give that love.

For Jesus, any outsider, marginalized by ritual, tradition, ethnicity, race, religion, gender, or anything else, will find their place in the Realm of God. All are equally loved and welcomed.

Jesus’ reception of the children reminds us that as adults, one of the hardest lessons we have to learn is how to receive love, the love of God or divine love expressed through human beings. We would like to earn it, to deserve it. But that is not the way the realm of God works. The realm of God belongs to those who can receive it as undeservedly and as happily as children.

And children have a profound gift of reminding us how to live in the world with openness, full of wonder and curiosity and delight. Watch children on a playground, easily gravitating toward each other. They have a playfulness and creativity that we often lose as we “grow up.”

Jesus welcomed and embraced the little children. Jesus challenged all those who thought they were holier and more important and said, **this** is how you should be… Open your heart…allow the innocence, trust, and joy of a child to enter you. Open yourself to the simple beauty of God’s creation that humans had in the garden.  A beauty fully realized when it is shared.

See one another with delight. See one another. See the beauty that is all around you.

*(Slight pause)*

**QUESTIONS 3** *(Pause after each question.)* **(Jim De Quattro)**

When have you found it hard to receive love, undeservedly and happily?

Children play. How is play part of your experience of God?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE**     **(Betty:** Share slide 3, time 2:00, chime, stop slide.**)**

Betty:  Kathy Cavanaugh will now lead our sharing, and then Bill Cavanaugh will lead us in prayer.

**SHARING  (Kathy Cavanaugh)**

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,

And let’s remember to leave a bridge of silence between speakers.

Now we begin in silence as we gather our reflections.  *[Long pause.]*

Please unmute yourself to speak. Who would like to begin our sharing?

(Sharing)

Thank you.

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY (Bill Cavanaugh)**

Just sit for a minute with all that has been shared this morning, and notice what prayer is rising in you. (Long-ish pause)

Trusting in the vastness of God’s love, let us pray. Our response will be, “Beloved One, live in us.”

For wisdom and courage to build relationships of both peace and justice, we pray. Beloved One, live in us.

For open hearts towards people who grew up without generous love, we pray. Beloved One, live in us.

For playful joy in our companionship with each other and with women religious, we pray. Beloved One, live in us.

What prayer is rising in you? Who would like to begin?

(People speak.)  Beloved One, live in us.

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.

*(Slight pause)*

**OFFERTORY (Betty Thompson)**

[If it’s already 11:30] Sit with the feeling of savoring unconditional love. *[Pause.]* To whom can you commit to offering it this week? *[Longer pause.]*

[If it’s earlier] Dostoyevsky wrote:

At some thoughts one stands perplexed, especially at the sight of (human) sin,

and wonders whether one should use force or humble love.

Always decide to use humble love.

If you resolve on that once and for all, you may subdue the whole world.

Loving humility is marvelously strong,

the strongest of all things and there is nothing else like it. *[Slight pause]*

This week, how can humble love guide you into care for creation? Or into a shift in a relationship? *[Slight pause]* What is the commitment you will make for this week? *[Pause]*

Let us pray.  Most gracious Love, we commit to sharing our time, talents, and treasures so that we may be a light and a witness. Amen.

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION (Kathleen Cross)**

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, OUR MOTHER                                                             (Kate Monagan)**

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

***All (muted):*** Our Father, Our Mother, 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 (Kate Monagan)**

May you be a blessing to everyone you meet.

And may everyone you meet be a blessing to you.

And to all his we say Amen.

Kate: Let us close by singing “This little light of mine” with Reggie Ott.

**CLOSING SONG:  THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE (Reggie Ott)**

This little light of mine,  
I'm gonna let it shine.  
This little light of mine,  
I'm gonna let it shine.  
This little light of mine,  
I'm gonna let it shine,  
let it shine, let it shine, oh let it shine.

Hide it under a bushel – NO!   
I'm gonna let it shine.  
Hide it under a bushel – NO!   
I'm gonna let it shine.  
Hide it under a bushel – NO!   
I'm gonna let it shine,  
let it shine, let it shine, oh let it shine.

Won’t let hatred (blow) it out,   
I'm gonna let it shine.  
Won’t let hatred (blow) it out,   
I'm gonna let it shine.  
Won’t let hatred (blow) it out,   
I'm gonna let it shine,  
let it shine, let it shine, oh let it shine.

Ev'rywhere I go,  
I'm gonna let it shine.  
Ev'rywhere I go,  
I'm gonna let it shine.  
Ev'rywhere I go,  
I'm gonna let it shine,  
let it shine, let it shine, oh let it shine.

This little light of mine,  
I'm gonna let it shine.  
This little light of mine,  
I'm gonna let it shine.  
This little light of mine,  
I'm gonna let it shine,  
let it shine, let it shine, oh let it shine.

**RESOURCES**

Gathering prayer: The quote is from the poem “This is Nano Nagle” by Sr. Raphael Considine. Honora (Nano) Nagle (1718-1784) was the courageous foundress of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Irish congregation to which the poet Sr. Raphael Considine belongs. <https://presentationsistersne.ie/seeds-of-action/>

Reflection:

* Sr. Mary G. McGlone, “Made for Each Other,” a reflection for the 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time 2018 - <https://www.ncronline.org/news/spirituality/scripture-life/twenty-seventh-sunday-ordinary-time-1>
* Karoline Lewis -<https://www.workingpreacher.org/authors/karoline-lewis>
* Sarah Attwood Otto - <https://www.catholicwomenpreach.org/preaching/10032021>

Offertory: Fyodor Dostoyevsky, The Brothers Karamazov

Final blessing: Thanks to Sr. Grace Hartzog for sharing this at Tuesday contemplative time.