**Solidarity with Sisters Communal Prayer for Sunday, Oct. 31, 2021**

**thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary time**

“This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you.” (John15:12)

**HELLOs** and then Betty mutes everyone. **Betty Thompson**

**WELCOME Betty Thompson**

Welcome, everyone!

* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?
* Thanks to Norb Bufka, Deb Ballard, Kathy & Lin Linabery who prepared this communal prayer.
* Thanks to Linda Donaldson for our music.
* Thanks to the people who will be reading and leading us in prayer today: Ann Jelen, Bill Cavanaugh, George Fulk, Judy Sholes, Kathy Cavanaugh, Maryann Dolan, Peggy Thompson, Reggie Ott, Richard McGinnis. If you’d like to read on future Sundays, please get in touch.
* This coming week as we celebrate the Feasts of All Saints and Souls, we know many of us are mourning the loss of loved ones. In a time when our parting rituals have been abbreviated, we may also wish to do more to celebrate their lives. Terri Butel is putting together a virtual “Book of Remembrance” to let us honor together our dear family and friends who have entered eternal life.

**SETTLING IN Betty Thompson**

To be with God and each other, we need to first be with ourselves. Let your breath slow and deepen and carry ease into your body and your mind as we pray:

May I quiet my words and listen….

May I calm my thoughts and be….

May I soften my heart and open….

May I still my soul and receive….

Pause

Now **Linda Donaldson** will lead us into our celebration.

**OPENING Song – Rain Down Your Love On Your People Jaime Cortez**

Rain down, rain down,

rain down your love on your people.

Rain down, rain down,

rain down your love God of life.

Faithful and true is the word of our God.

All of God’s works are so worthy of trust.

God’s mercy falls on the just and the right;

full of God’s love is the earth.

Rain down, rain down,

rain down your love on your people.

Rain down, rain down,

rain down your love God of life.

God of creation, we long for your truth,

you are the water of life that we thirst.

Grant that your love and

your peace touch our hearts,

all of our hope lies in you.

Rain down, rain down,

rain down your love on your people.

Rain down, rain down,

rain down your love God of life.

**GREETING Kathy Cavanaugh**

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

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

**CALL TO WORSHIP Kathy Cavanaugh**

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 Kathy Cavanaugh**

O Great Love,

thank you for living and loving in us and through us.

May all that we do flow from our deep connection with you and all beings.

Help us evolve as a community that vulnerably shares each other’s burdens.

Listen to our hearts’ longings for the healing of our world.

We come together trusting that the Spirit will be at work in us

helping us to let go, moving with you, and toward you in endless love.

Amen

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME Judy Sholes**

Today’s theme focuses on the key teaching of Jesus. Not an option, the command to love is very clearly the ultimate message in this morning’s reading: love of God, love of self, and love of neighbor. Furthermore, Jesus, near the end of his life, declares: Love one another as **I have loved you**!

We ask ourselves: What is love and who is our neighbor?

*(Slight pause)*

Now **Bill Cavanaugh** will read from the twelfth chapter of Mark, followed by questions and silence for reflection. Feel free to stay with whatever question calls you.

**READING 1 Mark 12**  **Bill Cavanaugh**

One of the scribes came to Jesus and asked him,

“Which is the first of all the commandments>”

Jesus replied, “The first is this: Hear, O Israel!

The Lord our God is Lord alone!

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,

with all your soul, with all your mind,

and with all your strength.

The second is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

There is no other commandment greater than these.”

**QUESTIONS Judy Sholes** *(Pause between questions.)*

How do you love “with all your heart, (pause)

“with all your soul, (pause)

“with all your mind”?

Whom do you love “with all your heart, (pause)

“with all your soul, (pause)

“with all your mind”?

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

**Betty:** George Fulk will lead us deeper into Jesus’ greatest commandment to us.

**READING 2 George Fulk**

**George Fulk:**Despite the directness of Jesus’ command, the meaning of love can be ambiguous for many people. Love has been described as an unnamable mystery, an evolving , unfolding truth. For our second reading, we have chosen a variety of short comments referring to love.

*Slight pause*

“All shall be well, all shall be well. For there is a Force of love moving through the universe

That holds us fast and will never let us go.”

St. Julian of Norwich

*Slight pause:*

“Do something outside yourself. Something to repair the tears in your community. Something to make life a little better for people less fortunate than you. That’s what I think a meaningful life is.”

Ruth Bader Ginsburg

*Slight pause*

“Embracing a love ethic means that we utilize all the dimensions of love – ‘care, commitment, trust, responsibility, respect, and knowledge’ - in our everyday lives. We can successfully do this only by cultivating awareness. Being aware enables us to critically examine our actions to see what is needed so that we can give care, be responsible, show respect, and indicate a willingness to learn …

Learning how to face our fears is one way to embrace love. Our fear may not go away, but it will not stand in the way.”

Fr. Richard Rohr

*Slight pause*

“I have decided to stick with love.  Hate is too great a burden to bear.”

 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

*Slight pause*

“And God says love your enemy, and I obeyed him and loved myself.”

Kahlil Gibran

“Hate can never overcome hate, only love can do that. If you come together with a mission, and it is grounded with love and a sense of community, you can make the impossible possible.”

John Lewis

**QUESTIONS Judy Sholes**

Which saying holds your attention?  How does it affect you - disturbing, inspiring, or something else?

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

**Judy Sholes**: **Kathy Linabery** will read selections from a Nov. 2020 Daily Meditation by Fr. Richard Rohr on the Transforming Power of Love

**READING 3 Kathy Linabery**

Fr. Richard begins with this introduction: Sikh activist, civil rights attorney, and author Valarie Kaur believes that “revolutionary love is the call of our times.” She brings the fullness of her faith and her humanity to answer the questions so many of us are asking.

Valerie writes: “If you cringe when people say that love is the answer, I do, too. The problem is not with love but with the way we talk about it. We mostly talk about love as a flood of emotion. But feelings alone are too fickle and fluid [RR—too based in the false self, I would also say] to sustain political action. Social reformers through history led entire nonviolent movements anchored in love as an ethic. Time and again, people gave their bodies and breath for one another, not only in the face of fire hoses and firing squads, but also in the quieter venues of their daily lives. Black feminists like bell hooks have long envisioned a world where the love ethic is a foundation for all arenas of our society. I believe we can reclaim love as a force for justice for a new time.

Here is my offering:

“Love” is more than a feeling. Love is a form of sweet labor: fierce, bloody, imperfect, and life-giving—a choice we make over and over again. If love is sweet labor, love can be taught, modeled, and practiced. This labor engages all our emotions. Joy is the gift of love. Grief is the price of love. Anger protects that which is loved. And when we think we have reached our limit, wonder is the act that returns us to love.

“Revolutionary love” is the choice to enter into wonder and labor for others, for our opponents, and for ourselves in order to transform the world around us. It is not a formal code or prescription but an orientation to life that is personal and political and rooted in joy. Loving only ourselves is escapism; loving only our opponents is self-loathing; loving only others is ineffective. All three practices together make love revolutionary, and revolutionary love can only be practiced in community.”

*Slight pause*

**QUESTIONS Judy Sholes**

How do these ideas expand the meaning of love for you?”

Where in your life could your love become more revolutionary than it is now?

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

**SHARING Richard McGinnis**

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,

As you share your feelings, please use "I” or “me". And let's leave a breath of silence between speakers. A bridge of silence allows us to take in what was just said and let it influence what we may want to share. **Betty: Put all questions into Chat.**

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 Peggy Thompson will lead us in prayer.

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY Peggy Thompson**

We know that God alone is enough for us. At the same time, we have heard Paul say that “if there is anything you need, pray for it.” So now we bring what is in our hearts to God. Our response will be Loving One, hear our prayer.

For 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 One, hear our prayer.

For all to grow in their own way of loving, for this we pray:

Loving One, hear our prayer.

For open hearts to recognize God in everyone and every thing, for this we pray:

Loving One, hear our prayer.

For revolutionary love to guide those who vote in state and local elections this week, and those for whom they vote, For this we pray: Loving One, hear our prayer.

As we enter into a time of remembering our loved ones who have passed into eternal life, let us be grateful for their gift of love, for this we pray:

Loving 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 remember to unmute and mute 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.

Peggy Thompson**: Ann Jalen** will now lead us in the Offertory.

**OFFERTORY Ann Jelen**

In these months of Ordinary Time, we celebrate the amazing fact that the Spirit of God lives in us now and at every moment. 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 in compassionate service to all. Amen.

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION Maryann Dolan**

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, give us confidence in you and in one another.

Make us your bread of abundance.  Make us your wine of joy.

Let even our fragments be plenty to share. Amen. *[Pause.]*

**OUR FATHER, OUR MOTHER Lynn Bufka**

Now let us join our hearts in solidarity with all people who seek to love as Jesus loved,

in the words that Jesus gave us:

***All (muted):*** Our Father, Our Mother, who are 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 Reggie Ott**

Broken, we have gathered. Nourished, we reach out.

**L**et us now go forth in peace, love, and communion with

each other and our hungry world. Amen

**Reggie Ott:**  Fr. James Marcionda, O.P. composed and performs our closing song, Becoming What We Pray. He reminds us we are “called to live the holiness of human relationships in gratitude, love, discipleship, and peace. It is a call to live as the communion of saints here and now.”

**CLOSING Song – BECOMING WHAT WE PRAY Fr. James Marchionda, O.P. Betty:** Play at 1.25 speed and stop at the end of the refrain after verse 3 (at 4:15).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mSo4uYwTJ9o&ab_channel=ContemplativeInterbeing>

1. When the hungry are fed, the naked are clothed,

And children living on the street are given a home,

When believers truly practice what we pray,

Then the world will be transformed.

When the lonely are loved, the frightened are freed,

And women everywhere are treated equally,

When believers truly practice what we pray,

Then the Kingdom of God will be near.

Refrain:

It’s not up to God alone to listen to prayer.

It’s not up to God alone to answer.

But when the people of God become what we pray,

The Kingdom of God is revealed.

When the people of God become what we pray,

The Kingdom of God is revealed.

2. When the nations at war put down all their arms

And troops from every country can return to their homes,

When our politics embody what we pray,

Then the world will be transformed.

When respect for the earth is greater than greed,

And human laws reflect creation’s dignity,

When believers truly practice what we pray,

Then the Kingdom of God will be near.

Refrain

It’s not up to God alone to listen to prayer.

It’s not up to God alone to answer.

But when the people of God become what we pray,

The Kingdom of God is revealed.

When the people of God become what we pray,

The Kingdom of God is revealed.

3. When religion is true to God’s living word

And preaches love and mercy over other concerns,

When the churches truly practice what we preach,

Then the world will be transformed.

When our tolerance grows beyond all our fears,

And we view one another as the image of God,

When believers truly practice what we pray,

Then the Kingdom of God will be near.

Refrain

It’s not up to God alone to listen to prayer.

It’s not up to God alone to answer.

But when the people of God become what we pray,

The Kingdom of God is revealed.

When the people of God become what we pray,

The Kingdom of God is revealed.

**SOURCES:**

Quote from Richard Rohr in second reading:

Richard Rohr, Daily Meditation, “A Love Ethic”, November 11, 2020.

Third Reading: Richard Rohr, Daily Meditation, ‘Revolutionary Love”,  November 12, 2020.

Picture of Syrian woman and child refugees:

<https://images.search.yahoo.com/images/view;_ylt=AwrJ7FuUu3ZhF00AvRnBGOd_;_ylu=Y29sbwNiZjEEcG9zAzEEdnRpZAMEc2VjA3Nj?p=picture+of+woman+and+child+refugee&back=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.yahoo.com%2Fsearch%3Fp%3Dpicture%2Bof%2Bwoman%2Band%2Bchild%2Brefugee%26ei%3DUTF-8&no=1&fr=ipad&h=650&w=980&imgurl=www.middleeasteye.net%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fcolumn-image%2FSyrians_Lebanon_AFP.jpg&rurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.middleeasteye.net%2Fcolumns%2Fsyrian-refugees-lebanon-are-falling-slavery-and-exploitation-2001907407&size=134KB&name=Syrian+refugees+in+Lebanon+are+falling+into+slavery+and+...&oid=OIP.Lk1cbbxxPzukpQo6vMxBCAHaE6&tt=Syrian+refugees+in+Lebanon+are+falling+into+slavery+and+...&sigr=PLDsu2b2AygO&sigi=Cd7Cw8ur_3ex&sigb=QgLhndlggVAL&sign=hqQt_rMArHET&sigt=hqQt_rMArHET>

Picture of the nurse with the Covid patient comes from this article:

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/02/covid-19-sickens-over-1700-health-workers-china-killing-6>

Picture of President Obama honoring Rep. John Lewis -

<https://images.search.yahoo.com/images/view;_ylt=AwrJ6yhKu3Zh87YA51nBGOd_;_ylu=Y29sbwNiZjEEcG9zAzEEdnRpZAMEc2VjA3Nj?p=pictures+of+john+lewis+receiving+medal+of+freedom&back=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.yahoo.com%2Fsearch%3Fp%3Dpictures%2Bof%2Bjohn%2Blewis%2Breceiving%2Bmedal%2Bof%2Bfreedom%26ei%3DUTF-8&no=1&fr=ipad&h=727&w=695&imgurl=patch.com%2Fimg%2Fcdn%2Fusers%2F127897%2F2011%2F02%2Fraw%2F747182bf6bc2845378c4d4bcbd585f8a.jpg%3Fwidth%3D695&rurl=https%3A%2F%2Fpatch.com%2Fgeorgia%2Fcascade%2Fcascades-john-lewis-receives-medal-of-freedom&size=39KB&name=Cascade%26%2339%3Bs+John+Lewis+Receives+Medal+of+Freedom+%7C+Cascade+...&oid=OIP._DY_QClBiCUHRXhIS-qiJgHaHv&tt=Cascade%26%2339%3Bs+John+Lewis+Receives+Medal+of+Freedom+%7C+Cascade+..&sigr=ccpzTLdKk_SJ&sigi=Ilcw4QxPrqmA&sigb=KrhjRWseV1eO&sign=JSOspNKIbfq7&sigt=JSOspNKIbfq7>