**Solidarity with Sisters’ Communal Prayer for Advent 2020**

**December 12, 2020 – Third Sunday (gaudete sunday and the feast of our lady of Guadalupe)**

*Surrender is the strongest, most subversive thing you can do in this world.* (Holly Whitaker)

*Until you move to the sense of being able to trust there is a God who is guiding you, who loves you more than you love yourself—that's when you've made the transfer.* (Fr. Richard Rohr)



**Image address. https://2.bp.blogspot.com/-s0\_8T4EmkIg/Vl96LLOSZ6I/AAAAAAAABl8/31F6UcW6MeI/s1600/3-advent-wreath-rejoice-gaudete.png**

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

**WELCOME (Betty)**

Welcome, everyone!

* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?
* Thanks to Richard McGinnis for preparing today’s communal prayer.
* Thanks to Mia and Tim Brown for lighting their Advent wreath with us this week.
* Thanks to Stu Sklamm and Linda Donaldson for leading our music.
* Thanks to the people who will be reading and leading us in prayer today: Kate Monagan, Mia and Tim Brown, Sister Jo’Ann De Quattro, Sister Jennie Lechtenberg, Mary Dolmage, Cecilia Estrada, Charlotte Cook, Mary Ott, Barbara Shaklan, Karen and Dan McCarthy, and Kathleen Cross.
* If you’d like to read on future Sundays, please get in touch.
* As you have probably noticed, the Scripture and Reflection Readings are sometimes edited and adapted. For the full texts, see the references under Resources at the end of the Communal Prayer.

**SETTLING IN (Mia Brown)**

Let’s move from greeting each other to making our hearts quiet for the coming of God. Let your body settle into a comfortable position. Notice your breath as it goes in and out…. Now let’s take 3 deep breaths. One to be here… one to be together….and one to hear God singing in you.

Now let us welcome the light.

**OPENING AND LIGHTING OF ADVENT WREATH (Stu Sklamm, Linda Donaldson, Mia and Tim Brown)**

Sung Antiphonal Opening:

Stu: You are Dawn, morning stars shall sing!

Linda 2: Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

Stu: You are Dawn, birds awake and sing!

Linda 2: Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

Stu: You are Dawn, rising sun shall sing!

Linda 2: Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

Stu: You are Dawn, light of justice sing!

Linda 2: Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

**Mia and Tim:** Please join us in lighting your third, traditionally pink Advent candle, which symbolizes joy. We pray –

God of light, let us be your peace to all we meet.  Give us light for our next step.

Linda (and all, muted): Rejoice! Rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

**GATHERING PRAYER (Kate Monagan)**

We gather because God comes to us, not only in a singular Christmas event but also in each person and in the lifetime of each generation. The scriptures tell us a long-treasured story of salvation for a people beloved of God. We are called to tell this story in a fresh, compelling way with our lives. We ask for grace to make the pathway straight for the coming of God.

And so we pray: Emmanuel, God with us, we give you this period of worship with confidence that you will act in us and through us. We believe that you will give us light for our next step. Amen.

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME (Richard McGinnis)**

This Advent, we invite you to take a fresh look at the familiar stories that lead us toward Bethlehem. Week by week the readings ask us to live with great **joy** as we work toward God’s just and merciful reign. What are we called to do to straighten the path, to smooth the road for the coming of God in our day?

Our Scriptures for today illuminate a pathway that leads us to a place of peace and joy from a place of worldly fear and anxiety.

We are reminded that the Lord is among us, and that we are enveloped by a divine love so pure that it is beyond our understanding.

Act kindly and pursue justice, we are told, and we will have joy.

Turn our heartfelt concerns over to God in prayer, and we will have peace.

The Lord rejoices over each of us, and we are called to rejoice in the Lord--always.

**Richard:**  Now Sister Jo’Ann De Quattro and Sister Jennie Lechtenberg will read from the Book of Zephaniah and the Letter to the Philippians. Then Tim Brown will offer questions for our reflection. You are free to stay with whatever question calls you.

*(Slight pause)*

**READING 1a: Zep** **3:14-15,17-18a**   **(Jo’Ann De Quattro)**

   …Sing joyfully, O Israel!

Yahweh has removed the judgment against you.

…you have no further misfortune to fear.  
    Yahweh, your God, is in your midst,  
        a mighty savior;  
    who will rejoice over you with gladness,  
        and renew you in love,

Yahweh will sing joyfully because of you,…

**READING 1b:** [**Phil 4:4-7**](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/philippians/4?4) **(Jennie Lechtenberg)**

Rejoice in the Savior always.  
I shall say it again:  rejoice!  
Your kindness should be known to all.  
Emanuel is near.  
Have no anxiety at all, but in everything,   
by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving,   
make your requests known to God.  
Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding   
will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

**QUESTIONS 1** *(Pause after each question.)* **(Tim Brown)**

When has an experience moved you to “sing joyfully” in your heart?

How has turning to God in prayer liberated you?

How does it feel to hear that Yahweh is singing joyfully because of you?

Title: Old Woman Singing
[Click for larger image view]**COMMUNAL SILENCE** **(Betty:** Share slide 1 to include the questions for the first reading and the image “Old Woman Singing”, time 2:30, chime, stop slide.**)**

**Richard:**  Now Mary Dolmage will read from the Gospel of Luke.

**READING 2 - GOSPEL:** **LK 3:10-16**   **(Mary Dolmage)**

The crowds asked John the Baptist,  
“What should we do?”  
He said to them in reply,  
“Whoever has two cloaks  
should share with the person who has none.   
And whoever has food should do likewise.”

Even tax collectors came to be baptized and they said to him,  
“Teacher, what should we do?”  
He answered them,   
“Stop collecting more than what is prescribed.”

Soldiers also asked him,  
“And what is it that we should do?”  
He told them,  
“Do not practice extortion,   
do not falsely accuse anyone,   
and be satisfied with your wages.”

Now the people were filled with expectation,   
and all were asking in their hearts   
whether John might be the Christ.

John answered them all, saying,   
“I am baptizing you with water,  
but one mightier than I is coming.  
one whose sandals I am not worthy to untie

This One will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”

**QUESTION 2** *(Pause after each question.)* **(Tim)**

With what hopes for charity and justice has the Spirit been filling your heart?

How has the Spirit been filling your heart and mind to answer the question: “What should we do?”

**COMMUNAL SILENCE** **(Betty:** Share slide 2 to include the question for the second reading and the image “John the Baptist preaching in the desert”, time 2:00, chime, stop slide.**)**

**Richard:**  Now Cecilia Estrada will read an excerpt adapted from a reflection by Mary M. McGlone, a Sister of St. Joseph, for the third Sunday of Advent.

**READING 3 (Cecilia Estrada)**

Today, the Third Sunday of Advent, is also the [feast](https://www.ncronline.org/node/194497) of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

…"La Morenita," as Guadalupe is called affectionately… refers to the fact that the image of Guadalupe depicts Mary as a mestiza, a person of both European and American ancestry, a divinely fashioned mixture of cultures.

For those who don't know the details, in 1531, [St. Juan Diego…](https://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_20020731_juan-diego_en.html), an indigenous peasant, received four visits from the woman he eventually identified as the Virgin Mary.

…La Morenita brought Juan Diego and his people the same message we hear in today's readings. The prophet Zephaniah said, "Shout for joy … your God is in your midst." La Morenita told Juan Diego, "I will give the peoples my love, my compassion, my help."

In today's Gospel, John the Baptist called individuals, each in their own way, to act with justice. La Morenita told Juan Diego, "I will listen to your cries and sadness ... relieve and heal your pain, your misery, your hurts." That's God's message of liberation.

…The celebration of the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe…creates a unique invitation for our own time. Our turmoil includes a pandemic and its attendant economic and social disruptions, increasing numbers of people on the move seeking a way to survive, climate crisis, and the church's 2022 road toward creating a religious culture of [synodality](https://www.ncronline.org/feature-series/synod-on-synodality/stories" \t "_blank).

Our Lady of Guadalupe symbolizes divine love and God's desire that humanity create a community of love and justice. La Morenita incarnates the intercultural unity that is possible when we allow faith to lead us to a communion that respects and simultaneously goes deeper than our diversity.

…On the personal level, Zephaniah and Our Lady of Guadalupe invite us to hear the message of God's indomitable love and presence among us.

On a communal level, Mary's reiteration of God's attention to the suffering of the poor and oppressed pleads with us to heed John's instructions…for social reform,

Our task now is to apply his style of reform to our own professions and social structures.

**QUESTION 3** *(Pause after each question.)* **(Tim)**

How do you apply John’s instructions for reform to the structures that are part of your life?

What signs have you seen of love and justice emerging in response to the agonizing concerns of our day?

A picture containing text

Description automatically generated**COMMUNAL SILENCE** **(Betty:** Share slide 3 to include the question for the third reading and the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, time 2:00, chime, stop slide.**)**

**Richard:** Charlotte Cook will lead our sharing.

**SHARING (Charlotte Cook)**

We invite you to **briefly** share what emerged in **your** heart this morning as you listened and as you reflected on these readings. What you share 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.

Let’s be sure to leave a momentary bridge of silence between speakers.

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

Please unmute yourself to speak, and mute again afterwards.

Who would like to begin?

(Sharing)

*[Let sharing continue for about 20 minutes or until 11:20.]*

Thank you for your insights and thoughts.  We have to stop now, but we can continue to share after the final song, as we often do.

**SUNG PRAYER**

**Richard:**  Before Mary Ott leads us into our own prayers, let’s listen to a part of the recording by Pentatonix entitled “Prayer”.

(Betty: Play “Prayer” by Pentatonix from 14 to 2:12, which is audio with display of words against a still image. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HcszU7KS3Mw>)

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY (Mary Ott)**

Let us pause and gather the prayers that are rising in us. *[Pause.]*

Our response will be: God of joy, hear our prayer.

Emmanuel, God with us, convert us from anxiety to confidence that your reign is emerging. Help us to hear your singing among us. For this we pray. (Response.)

God of hope, make us strong as friends to strangers and victims, and companions to those whose hearts are broken. For this we pray. (Response.)

God of love beyond measure, give us faith to live joyfully and be your song for all to hear. For this we pray. (Response.)

God of joy and exultation, we ask your blessing upon the Catholic sisters as they spread joy throughout the world by acts of faithful discipleship. For this we pray. (Response.)

For what else shall we pray? Please remember to unmute and mute yourself.

(People speak.) (Response)

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 – wh~~i~~le entrusting the outcome to you. Amen.

**OFFERTORY (Mary Ott)**

**Mary:** Each of us has traditional ways of Advent preparation. Today Barbara Shaklan will share hers.

**Barbara Shaklan**: (1-2 minutes – the Advent tradition of Barbara and her family)

**Mary**: Knowing all that we have received from God, let us now take time to name within ourselves something we will do this week to let God sing in us. *[Pause.]*

**Mary:** Amen.

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION (Karen 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 **Earth** and the 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 (Dan McCarthy)**

Now let us join our hearts to pray with all who seek peace and justice throughout the world, in the words of the Polynesian and Maori people and the New Zealand Anglican community:

Eternal Spirit,  
Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,  
Source of all that is and that shall be,  
Mother and Father of us all,  
Loving God, in whom is heaven:

The hallowing of your name echo through the universe;  
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world;  
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings;  
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom  
sustain our hope and come on earth.

With the bread we need for today, feed us.  
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.  
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.  
From trial too great to endure, spare us.  
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.  
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,  
now and forever. Amen.

**FINAL BLESSING by Jan Richardson (Kathleen Cross)**

Let us extend our hands in blessing of one another with the following words:

**Blessed are you**  
who bear the light  
in unbearable times,  
who testify  
to its endurance  
amid the unendurable,  
who bear witness  
to its persistence  
when everything seems  
in shadow  
and grief.

**Blessed are you**in whom  
the light lives,  
in whom  
the brightness blazes—  
your heart  
a chapel,  
an altar where  
in the deepest night  
can be seen  
the fire that  
shines forth in you  
in unaccountable faith,  
in stubborn hope,  
in love that illumines  
every broken thing  
it finds. Amen.

**CLOSING SONG:** **“Christ, Be Our Light” (Linda Donaldson)**

Verse 1

Longing for light, we wait in darkness,

Longing for truth, we turn to you.

Make us your own, your holy people, Refrain

Light for the world to see. *Christ, be our light!*

*Shine in our hearts.*

*Shine in the darkness.*

*Christ be our light!*

*Shine in your church gathered today.*

Verse 3

Longing for food, many are hungry.

Longing for water, many still thirst.

Make us your bread, broken for others,

Shared until all are fed. Refrain

Verse 5

Many the gifts, many the people,

many the hearts that yearn to belong.

Let us be servants to one another,

Making your kingdom come. Refrain

**RESOURCES:**

Scriptures:

Excerpted and adapted from https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/121221.cfm

Reflection: Adapted from Mary M. McGlone, CSJ, “Dec. 12, 2021: Third Sunday of Advent, dated Nov. 1, 2021. https://www.ncronline.org/sunday-resource/dec-12-2021-third-sunday-advent

Prayers of the Community. Inspired, in part, by material from “the Revised Common Lectionary,” a service Vanderbilt Divinity Library. https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/prayers.php?id=97

Music:

Pentatonix, “Prayer”. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HcszU7KS3Mw

Closing Song--“Christ Be Our Light.” Selection from Glory to God, The Presbyterian Hymnal, Westminster John Know Press (First Ed. 2013), #314.

Art:

Advent Candles. https://2.bp.blogspot.com/-s0\_8T4EmkIg/Vl96LLOSZ6I/AAAAAAAABl8/31F6UcW6MeI/s1600/3-advent-wreath-rejoice-gaudete.png (obtained at https://www.liturgytools.net/2015/12/pictures-3rd-sunday-advent-year-c-catholic-lectionary.html)

Old Woman Singing. Honthorst, Gerrit van, 1590-1656. Old Woman Singing, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=55667> [retrieved December 1, 2021]. Original source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Honthorst\_Old\_woman\_singing.jpg.

John the Baptist preaching in the desert. JESUS MAFA. John the Baptist preaching in the desert, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=48386> [retrieved December 1, 2021]. Original source: http://www.librairie-emmanuel.fr (contact page: https://www.librairie-emmanuel.fr/contact).

Our Lady of Guadalupe. https://encryptedtbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcQmWtiFwvCr8ZH3MOcppQnslPskHnBf7lvbvQ&usqp=CAU

Nativity Scene with Wise Men and Shepherds.

https://pixabay.com/illustrations/christmas-jesus-christ-god-holy-5751280/