**Solidarity with Sisters’ Communal Prayer**

**October 2, 2022 – 27th Sunday of Ordinary Time**

*“*…faith the size of a mustard seed is enough….” Joan DeMerchant



Field of Mustard Plants in Bengladesh

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

**WELCOME (Richard McGinnis)**

Welcome, everyone!

* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?
* I prepared today’s communal prayer.
* Thanks to the people who will be reading and leading us in music and prayer today: Marilyn Voigt, Peggy Thompson, Sr. Jennie Lechtenberg, Karen McCarthy, Rose Marie Smith, Kathy Linabery, Anne Regan, Kate Monagan, Charlotte Cook, Sr. Jo’Ann De Quattro, Mia Brown, and Tim Brown.
* If you’d like to read on future Sundays, please get in touch.

**SETTLING IN (Richard McGinnis)**

Let yourself settle into the quiet center in yourself. Feel the breath moving in you… loosening you… making space inside you…. In and out…. God’s own breath stirring in you…. uniting you with all that breathes, all that is… opening you to the power of the Spirit in you…. In us…. Here….

Now Marilyn Voigt will lead us into our prayer together.

**OPENING SONG--**“We Walk by Faith.” Lyrics by Henry Alford; music by Marty Haugen. **(Marilyn Voigt)**

**We Walk by Faith**

We walk by faith, and not by sight:  
No gracious words we hear  
Of him who spoke as none e'er spoke,  
But we believe him near.  
  
We may not touch his hands and side,  
Nor follow where he trod;  
Yet in his promise we rejoice,  
And cry "My Lord and God!"  
  
Help then, O Lord, our unbelief,  
And may our faith abound;  
To call on you when you are near,  
And seek where you are found:  
  
That when our life of faith is done  
In realms of clearer light  
We may behold you as you are  
In full and endless sight.  
  
We walk by faith, and not by sight:  
No gracious words we hear  
Of him who spoke as none e'er spoke,  
But we believe him near.

**CALL TO WORSHIP/ GATHERING PRAYER**  **(Sr. Jennie Lechtenberg)**

We gather together to encounter Christ, who shows us the power of faith. We pray for an increase in faith, which is the true guide for our lives. A faith that makes us aware of the calling to a vocation of love and service. Each morning, God sends us the same message: “I am faithful and I love you more than you can imagine.” May the love that God has for us keep us patient as we inquire, nudge, and challenge each other. May it be so. *[Pause.]*

Richard McGinnis will introduce us to today’s theme.

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME (Richard McGinnis)**

How powerful is faith?

From the readings for today, we learn that:

faith provides strength from God to bear the unbearable,

faith assures us of the triumph of light over darkness in accordance with God’s vision, and

faith is the true guide for a meaningful life.

The Good News of the Gospel is that faith is so powerful that it exceeds the limits of our imagination.

We are exhorted by the readings to tend the seed of faith that is within us, to allow it to be a source of patience, to nurture it, and to guard faith for the precious gift that it is--in light of the love that Jesus has for us and with the help of the Holy Spirit that dwells within us.

Like the mustard seed, or the more familiar dandelion, the miracle of the seed is that it has the potential to propagate and multiply in countless and unexpected ways.

We are provided by the readings with specific ways to nurture our seed – meditating upon inspired writings, being patient and persevering, bearing hardships with fortitude and hope, not alone but with the help of God and each other, and embracing a prophetic imagination.

In the film, “Sound of Metal”, the character Ruben is a drummer struggling with the onset of deafness, frustration, anger and loss of control. He is invited by a mentor to enter a sparsely-furnished room each morning. When no longer able to sit still, Ruben is directed to write, write, write. The exercise is designed to calm his chaos and to transport him to a place of inner peace—where he may catch a glimpse of paradise.

How do we nurture the seeds we have been given and increase our faith so that we too can glimpse paradise and perhaps move mountains?

*[Slight pause]*

Now Rose Marie Smith will read from the Oracle of Habakkuk. Karen McCarthy will offer questions that will lead us into a period of silent reflection. Listen for what God promises to people who are surrounded by forces of darkness.

**READING 1** Oracle of Habakkuk 1: [**2-3; 2:2-4**](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/Habakkuk/1?2) **(Rose Marie Smith)**

How long, O LORD?  I cry for help  
 but you do not listen!  
 I cry out to you, "Violence!"  
 but you do not intervene.  
 Why do you let me see ruin;  
 why must I look at misery?  
 Destruction and violence are before me;  
 there is strife, and clamorous discord.

 Then the LORD answered me and said:

 Write down the vision clearly upon the tablets,  
 so that one can read it readily. For  
 the vision still has its time,  
 presses on to fulfillment, and will not disappoint;  
 if it delays, wait for it, it will surely come,..  
 The rash one has no integrity;  
 but the just one, because of his faith, shall live.

**QUESTIONS 1** *[Pause after each question.]* **(Karen McCarthy)**

What is behind the frustration and impatience that arises in you?

What is it that you do to overcome your inner turmoil to find peace?



A single mustard seed in the hands of a child.

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

**Richard:** Next Kathy Linabery will read from the Second Letter of Paul to Timothy and the Gospel of Luke both of which focus on the importance of faith. Notice how you are invited to grow your faith and experience the power it gives you.

**READING 2 2 Timothy 1:6,8; Luke 17:5-6 (Kathy Linabery)**

2 Timothy 1:6, 8, 13-14

Beloved:

I remind you, to stir into flame  
the gift of God that you have through the imposition of my hands.

…bear your share of hardship for the gospel  
with the strength that comes from God.  
  
Take as your norm the sound words that you heard from me,  
in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.  
Guard this rich trust with the help of the Holy Spirit  
that dwells within us.

Luke 17:5-6

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."  
The Lord replied,  
"If you have faith the size of a mustard seed,  
you would say to this mulberry tree,  
'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.”

*[Slight pause]*

**QUESTIONS 2** *[Pause after each question.]* **(Karen McCarthy)**

When have you seen a faithful response to a situation generate a surprising outcome?

What has enabled your trust in the Good News to grow and deepen?

When have you had hands placed on you in a way that changed you?



The flower of a blooming mustard plant.

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

**Richard**: Now Anne Regan will read from an adaptation of a reflection on the Scriptures by Maryknoll Sister Sia Nyasari Temu of Tanzania.

**READING 3 (Anne Regan)**

Between 2008 and 2014, I had the privilege of sitting in Conversation for Social Change Circles as a participant-facilitator. In 2010 we held conversations in the Rift-Valley, one of the regions in Kenya which were affected negatively by post-election violence in 2007-08.

The prophet Habakkuk addressed his concern to God regarding the violence the Israelites were going through at the hands of the Babylonians. Like him, the participants in the Rift Valley area raised a voice of anguish and complaint to God: “How long, O LORD? I cry for help, but you do not listen?” The post-election violence of 2007-08 had claimed the lives of their loved ones and destroyed their property. Many became internally displaced people in their own country. Their resilience was in their faith, just like Habakkuk, who took it up with God and demanded an answer.

Habakkuk reminds us that even when we experience God’s silence, God is still aware of the pain and the suffering of God’s people. In his complaint, Habakkuk hears God’s response; “write down the vision clearly upon the tablets, so that one can read it readily. For the vision still has its time…if it delays, wait for it, it will surely come, it will not be late” (2: 2-3). This was assurance for the Israelites that God had not abandoned them, and it was necessary to have that vision of hope written down as a reminder that God has always been with them.

Faith has an amazing power to transform our lives from a situation of despair to a hopeful one. Faith has the ability to empower us to act, to believe in the power bigger than ourselves, which is working within us to achieve a better future. When something is written down, people have something to go back to like a point of reference to remind future generations of the faithfulness of God, especially in difficult moments.

Faith involves a prophetic imagination to be able to imagine new symbols and new images which will motivate and inspire people to act in ways that transform structures of injustice into processes of justice and freedom. Faith calls for patience and perseverance. This is the faith which keeps the hungry, the elderly, the sick, and the marginalized hoping for a better future.

It is not surprising that the disciples appeal to Jesus: “Increase our faith!” Jesus told his disciples all they need is faith “the size of a mustard seed” to do great things. Jesus is not talking of a magic way of doing things, rather it is the role faith plays in realizing our vision, dreams, and desires. It is when we believe in something that we are able to realize it.

Today Jesus reminds us that faith is necessary for a meaningful life. It is not easy to live the Gospel values of forgiveness, service to one another, and love of God. It is not easy to see our interconnectedness and the suffering of others. We need our faith in Jesus. As servants whose service is to transform the oppressive structures in our community, we ask Jesus, “Lord increase our faith.” Amen.

**QUESTIONS 3** *[Pause after each question.]* **(Karen McCarthy)**

What has given you hope to respond to a seemingly overwhelming problem?

What has inspired you to expand your prophetic imagination? What new images and symbols do you see?



Cross framed against a field of mustard plants in bloom.

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

**Richard**: Kate Monagan will lead our sharing.

**SHARING (Kate Monagan)**

We know the wisdom of our community includes both words shared and silent listening. We invite you to share the essence of what is emerging within you from our readings and silence. Let’s begin in silence as we gather our reflections. [Long-ish pause]

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

[Sharing]

[Long silences are common and they can be fruitful. If there is extended silence after 15 minutes:] Is there anyone else who would like to share?  [Long pause]

[Stop by about 11:20.]

Thank you.  Let us pause for a minute of silence to hold all that has been said, and to notice what is rising in us in response. (Long pause)

Hold onto what God is saying in you right now. We can continue sharing after the final song. For now, let us respond to God in prayer.

Now Charlotte Cook will lead us in prayer.

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY (Charlotte Cook)**

Let’s pause to notice the prayers that arise in us now. *[Pause]* Our response will be: “**Abba, we place our trust in you**.”

Abba—

energize us to speak boldly with you of the burdens that press upon our hearts;

enfold us in the healing embrace of your loving presence when we are enduring hardships that seem overwhelming.

stir into flame the mustard seeds of our faith to be agents of love in responding to the burdens and hardships that confront us;

For this we pray. **Abba, we place our trust in you**.

For the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and their member congregations, increase their faith as the continue to be the face of your mercy in so many ways to those who are suffering throughout the world. For this we pray. **Abba, we place our trust in you.**

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

*[Shared prayers]* **Abba, we place our trust in you.**

O You who see us, hear us, and love us more than we can imagine, thank you for receiving our intentions, spoken and unspoken. We entrust all to you. Amen.

**OFFERTORY (Sr. Jo’Ann De Quattro)**

Abba, all that we have comes from you. With gratitude, we welcome your gifts and we offer to share them with one another in faith and love. Blessed Be.

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION (Sr. Jo’Ann De Quattro)**

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 wine,

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, we entrust ourselves to you and to one another.

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

Let even our fragments be plenty to share.

Blessed Be.

**THE PRAYER OF JESUS (Mia Brown)**

Now let us join our hearts as if we could join our hands in harmony with our family throughout the world:

***All (muted):***

Heavenly Father, heavenly Mother,

Holy and blessed is your true name.

We pray for your reign of peace to come,

We pray that your good will be done,

Let heaven and earth become one.

Give us this day the bread we need,

Give it to those who have none.

Let forgiveness flow like a river between us,

From each one to each one.

Lead us to holy innocence

Beyond the evil of our days —

Come swiftly Mother, Father, come.

For yours is the power and the glory and the mercy:

Forever your name is All in One.

Amen.

**FINAL BLESSING (Tim Brown)**

As we close, let us feel this blessing upon us.

**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.

Now Peggy Thompson will lead us in “City of God”.

**CLOSING SONG–** “City of God” by Dan Schutte **(Peggy Thompson-w/o instruments)**

**City of God**

Awake from your slumber! Arise from your sleep!  
A new day is dawning for all those who weep.  
The people in darkness have seen a great light.  
The Lord of our longing has conquered the night.  
  
Let us build the city of God.  
May our tears be turned into dancing!  
For the Lord, our light and our love,  
has turned the night into day!  
  
We are sons of the morning; we are daughters of day.  
The One who has loved us has brightened our way.  
The Lord of all kindness has called us to be  
a light for his people to set their hearts free.  
  
Let us build the city of God.  
May our tears be turned into dancing!  
For the Lord, our light and our love,  
has turned the night into day!  
  
God is light; in him there is no darkness.  
Let us walk in his light, his children, one and all.  
O comfort my people; make gentle your words.  
Proclaim to my city the day of her birth.  
  
Let us build the city of God.  
May our tears be turned into dancing!  
For the Lord, our light and our love,  
has turned the night into day!  
  
O city of gladness, now lift up your voice.  
Proclaim the good tidings that all may rejoice!  
  
Let us build the city of God.  
May our tears be turned into dancing!  
For the Lord, our light and our love,  
has turned the night into day!

**RESOURCES**

INTRODUCTORY QUOTATION.

Joan DeMerchant.

https://www.ncronline.org/news/spirituality/scripture-life/twenty-seventh-sunday-ordinary-time

**Scriptures.**

Sourced from <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/100222.cfm>

Reflection on Scriptures.

Adapted from Sia Nyasari Temu, MM, Catholic Women Preach, October 6, 2019.

<https://www.catholicwomenpreach.org/preaching/10062019>

**The Prayer of Jesus.** The universal prayer of Jesus from Parker J. Palmer.

<https://www.elkgroveumc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Alternative-versions-of-the-Lord.pdf>

**Final blessing.** Jan Richardson: <https://adventdoor.com/2014/12/12/advent-3-testify-to-the-light/>

**Music**.

Opening Hymn. “We Walk by Faith”, Lyrics by Henry Alford, music by Marty Haugen.

<https://catholichymn.blogspot.com/2015/10/we-walk-by-faith.html>

Video Option. “We Walk by Faith” by Marty Haugen sung by Chris Brunelle <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMXaIPitEOA> (00 to 1:42)

Closing Hymn. “City of God” by Dan Schutte. <https://catholichymn.blogspot.com/2015/11/City-of-God.html>

Video Option. “City of God. [https://catholichymn.blogspot.com/2015/11/City-of-God.html (00](https://catholichymn.blogspot.com/2015/11/City-of-God.html%20(00) to 3:12)

ART

Field of mustard plants in Bengladesh.

<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/9/99/Mustard_plant_bangladesh.jpg/360px-Mustard_plant_bangladesh.jpg>

A single mustard seed in the hands of a child.

<https://media.istockphoto.com/photos/childs-hands-holding-a-mustard-seed-picture-id1312333280?k=20&m=1312333280&s=612x612&w=0&h=gnuj03o8DzvwwWRpMnZJJ54l5QZZt5nTD_SGp8kDj3k=>

The flower of a blooming mustard plant.

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/b/b7/Flower\_of\_Mustard\_Plant.jpg/405px-Flower\_of\_Mustard\_Plant.jpg

The Cross framed against a field of mustard plants in bloom.

<https://cdn.pixabay.com/photo/2014/10/20/18/42/field-cross-495641__340.jpg>