



Community of St. Bridget
an inclusive catholic experience

Third Sunday of Lent – March 3, 2024

Liturgist: Donna Mazzola; Homilist: Fionnuala Frances



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Suggestion: Please have a copy of the written liturgy on hand and a piece of bread and cup of wine/grape juice so you can participate fully in this liturgy.

All are welcome to come into this place that we make special by our very presence. Where the ordinary is sanctified, the human is celebrated, the compassionate is expected.

ALL: Together we make it a holy place with our every act of celebration.

With the flame of St. Bridget, we proclaim the transformative power of God. We give thanks that this love has been, is now, and will ever be at work within us and in all creation. Amen.

Opening Song: **O Holy One (An Invocation)**, by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan; Album: Worldmaking © 2004.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dnq4Llj-rwI> (no video)

O Holy One, we gather in Your presence
O Living One, we welcome all to hope

Refrain: You are our God (You are our God)
We are Your people (We are Your people)
You are our God (You are our God)
We are Your people (We are Your people)

O Holy One, the Covenant of history
O Living One, we live and move in You **R**

Today we celebrate the Third Sunday of Lent. Our readings today remind us that the power of God is not revealed in lofty precepts or in magnificent buildings but rather in the broken body of Christ. We open to this truth as we pray in the name of our Sacred Essence: Source of All Being, Eternal Word, and Holy Wisdom-Sophia. Amen.

Transformation Rite* from Black Liturgies, Cole Arthur Riley (adapted)

As we prepare to celebrate this sacred meal, we acknowledge things we have done, and things we have left undone. Holy One, we see that we have neglected our calling to be your image bearers to all of creation. With your courage we will not look away.

1. God of Compassion, we confess that we, as individuals and nations, have engaged in self-protection and delusion.
2. Let this be a season when we reclaim the practice of telling the truth about our histories, that we would no longer shield ourselves and others from the harm we have caused by coddling our guilt and insecurity.
3. Let our love be made of unapologetic truth-telling. Let those of us whose truth has not been believed, find our stories centered and affirmed in this season.
4. Guide us toward spaces that have grown weary of delusions, desiring to see the world for what it is, in all its complexities, beauties, tragedies, and oppression.
5. And as we cultivate honest communities, let our healing and liberation rise to meet us. Amen.

Opening Prayer

O Beloved One, you call us to be your image bearers in a world longing for justice and peace. Yet, we often lack the courage to walk in the way you have shown us. We reassure ourselves by living dutifully. Awaken in us the zeal and passion to live beyond duty into Your liberating love for ourselves and all our kin. For You are our God and we are Your people. Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD**

*We sense the movement of the Spirit of Life
as we listen to the Scripture readings broken open and shared by all.*

First Reading: Micah 6:8

A reading from the book of Micah:

This is what Yahweh asks of you: only this, to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God.

The inspired words of the prophet, Micah. Amen.

Responsorial: Psalm 19 (*Psalms for Praying* by Nan Merrill)

Cantor: *O my Beloved, my strength and my joy!*

The law of Love is perfect, reviving the soul;
The testimony of Love is sure, making wise the simple; **R**

The precepts of Love are right, rejoicing the heart;
The authority of Love is pure, enlightening the eyes; **R**

The spirit of Love is glorious, enduring forever;
The rites of Love are true, awakening compassion. **R**

More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. **R**

Acclamation: *Spirit of the Living God* by Michael Crawford; WMG; UMPG, LatinAutor, Adorando Brazil, Capitol CMG Publishing, and 6 Music Rights Societies

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0_B0DpTbUI (no video-end at 1:31)

Spirit of the Living God, fall fresh on me (x2)	(gesture of open hands rising)
Melt me. Mold me. Fill me. Use me.	(hands move from head to lap)
Spirit of the Living God, fall fresh on me.	(return to open hands rising)

Second Reading – Gospel: John 2:13-25

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John.

Because it was almost the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

In the Temple, he found people selling cattle, sheep and pigeons, while moneychangers sat at their counters. Making a whip out of cords, Jesus drove them all out of the Temple — even the cattle and sheep — and overturned the tables of the moneychangers, scattering their coins. Then he faced the pigeon sellers: “Take all this out of here! Stop turning God’s house into a market!” The disciples remembered the words of Scripture: “Zeal for your house consumes me.”

The Temple authorities intervened and said, “What sign can you show us to justify what you have done?” Jesus answered, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

They retorted, “It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and you are going to raise it up in three days?” But the temple he was speaking of was his body. It was only after Jesus had been raised from the dead that the disciples remembered this statement and believed the scripture — and the words that Jesus had spoken.

While Jesus was in Jerusalem for the Passover festival, many people believed in him, for they could see the signs he was performing. But Jesus knew all people, and did not entrust himself to them. Jesus never needed evidence about people’s motives; he was well aware of what was in everyone’s heart.

The inspired words of the evangelist, John. Amen.

Contemporary Reading: *The Way of the Cross: The Path to New Life*, 02.19.2024: *Vision and Viewpoint*, a weekly e-newsletter, by Joan Chittister

An excerpt from *The Way of the Cross: The Path to New Life* by Joan Chittister:

Having preached the world of the Beatitudes in a world of violence, having healed the hopeless, questioned the system, opened his arms to the outcasts, and challenged the world to live differently so that life would be different for everyone everywhere, the cost of it all in jealousy, resentment, anger, and ill will comes quickly. It is this burden of malice that is the cross Jesus reaches out to take hold of here. This is the cross he did not want but was willing to accept so that the world might see another way to be alive.

The inspired words of spiritual writer and prophet, Joan Chittister. Amen.

Shared Homily: Fionnuala Frances

We are approaching that time of year when we have to grapple, perhaps uncomfortably, with the Incarnation. That is to say, how are we understanding Jesus to be fully human and fully divine. Most of the time it’s probably possible to live quietly with that mystery, with no clear idea of what it might really mean. But there are times, and this is one of them, when we have to notice both the humanity and the divinity of this man Jesus. There is the time when we hear about his humanity, about a woman giving birth to a baby and wrapping him in swaddling clothes. And there is a time, coming soon, when we hear the words of Pontius Pilate to the crowds as he shows them a bloody and beaten figure and says, “Behold the man”.
A man.

We are in Lent, following the story of the Way of the Cross, the cross Jesus did not want but was willing to accept. We are acknowledging the pain of the world but trusting also in the Resurrection, that Jesus emerges from the tomb, overcomes death. Is God.

What sort of God is this?

Look at today's Psalm, 19, how it attempts to convey in words the sensuous nature of Love, of God, of Truth. Sweeter than honey dripping from the honeycomb. Close your eyes for a moment and imagine that rich sweet taste. That is a taste of the divine, a taste of God.

And that angry, sweating, frightened man described in the Gospel, that is also a taste of God.

Spirit of the living God, falling fresh on you. Movements of your body might also convey your efforts to grasp at understanding and communicating, in response to the Spirit. Falling fresh on you, on us all, filling us, speaking to us, in our coming together, in our scripture readings, in our reflections and in our sharing.

Who is Jesus for you, today, and what is he saying to you?

Holding these thoughts in the sacred space among us and strengthened by the support of one another, we now proclaim our affirmation of faith:

Affirmation of Faith:

- 6.** We believe in The Source of All Life, creator and nurturer of all, who is ever and always present with us. We believe in Jesus, the Anointed One, who is our love, our hope, and our light.
- 7.** We believe in Sacred Spirit, the breath of wisdom Sophia, the power of the winds enwrapping us in glory. We believe the Holy Spirit energizes and guides us to build caring communities and to challenge oppression, exploitation, and injustices and to make the world a better place by our presence.
- 1.** We believe that the Holy One loves us passionately and forgives us everything. We believe that we are radiant images of our Creator who calls us to live fully, love tenderly, and serve generously.
- 2.** We believe we are called to care for each other and all of creation. We believe in the Communion of Saints, our forever friends, who support us on life's journey, who walk with us in love, who are never far from us, who are separated from us by a mere veil, always near, opening our minds to what is difficult to see.
- 3.** We believe in Mary, the mother of Jesus, whose resolve made it possible for her son, Jesus, to become prophet and teacher who journeyed on the earth blessing the sick, making whole the broken, healing many,

instilling faith in his followers, so that they insure his legacy for all eternity.

4. We believe in the Cosmic Christ, the everlasting Presence, one with the universe. We believe in the partnership and equality of women and men in our church and our world. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

O Holy One of mystery and compassion, who chose us before we were formed in the life-giving waters of the womb, who dedicated and appointed us to bring healing and love to your people and all creation, we now bring to this Table our blessings, cares, and concerns. After each request, our response remains:

We awaken to your call.

(For whom and for what shall we pray?)

Cosmic Oneness, you dwell in every creature. We know you hear our prayers and continually pour out your mercy and grace. Make us mindful of our worthiness, always enveloped in your love and compassion. Strengthen our faith as you work through us to co-create your ever-expanding Kindom. Amen.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Sign of Peace

As we prepare for this sacred meal, we reaffirm that just as Jesus was anointed, so is each of us. And so, we celebrate our Creator's fruitful love as we extend our blessing to one another with joy. May the peace that our brother Jesus offers, be always with us!

Offertory: (All raise bread and cup)

We place on our plate the harvest to be won by labor's love. And into the cup we pour all the sap which is to be pressed out this day from Earth's fruits.

ALL: O Gracious One, giver of the gifts we bring, receive them from all those gathered here today, affirming the sacrament of your Presence among us.

The Holy One is with us, abounding in Love!

5. Giving thanks to the Source of All Life, we open our hearts in the name of Jesus, who lives and loves, heals and empowers through us.
6. All Embracing Presence, the first passion of Jesus was his passion for You and his passion for justice; namely, to incarnate your justice by demanding for all a fair share of a world belonging to and guided by your covenant with Israel. In solidarity with Jesus, and with all the faithful women and men who have gone before us, we lift up our hearts in song:

Holy, Holy, Holy by Christopher Grundy on *Stepping In* © 2012.
<https://youtu.be/GUm2bEGB2dU> (no video)

Holy, holy, holy God of love and justice
The whole universe and everything beyond it,
Every galaxy and flower,
Every singing bird and falling drop of rain
Is ablaze
With your glory, glory, glory!
O, God most wonderful.
Blessed is the One who comes in your name!
Hosannah! Hosannah!

7. Loving Creator, we see around us the work of your hands, the fruit of your wisdom and love. The unfolding story of creation witnesses unceasingly to your creative power. We, your creatures, often deviate from that wisdom, hindering your creative presence in our midst.
1. Sending among us Jesus, our Light and Hope, you birth afresh in our world the power of Sophia Wisdom, and in the gift of this Spirit, your creative goodness blooms anew, amid the variety and wonder of life.

ALL: Generous Gifter of Life, make us ever more aware of the presence of Your Spirit in these, our gifts, as we celebrate the +transformative energy within this bread and fruit of the vine given to nurture afresh in us, the discerning gifts of wisdom, light, and truth.

2. As a Christian people we celebrate the Open Table, proclaimed by Jesus our liberator and our friend, a Table of abundant life, inclusive love, and liberation, where all are welcome, and from which no one is to be excluded.

On the night before he died, Jesus did more than ask us to remember him. He showed us how to live when he washed the feet of his friends. At the Table, he took the Passover Bread, spoke the grace, broke the bread and offers it to us now, saying: **(All raise bread)**

ALL: *Take and eat, all of you. This is my very Self which I give to you. (pause)*

When supper ended, Jesus took the cup, spoke the grace, and offers it to us now, saying: **(All raise cup)**

ALL: *Take and drink this cup, the life of the new and everlasting covenant. It is poured out for you and for all, so that you might be free. Whenever you remember me like this, I am among you. (pause)*

We give thanks for who we are in this Unfolding Love:

ALL: Matter becomes conscious, the universe coming to reflect on itself:
earthen vessels that hold a treasure, a temple of the Spirit, the Body of Christ.

(All raise bread and cup)

ALL: All honor to the Creator of All, the Giver of Life,
To Jesus, the Risen One,
And to the Spirit, Bond of Love.
Let glory and praise be sung!

Cantor: Amen! (x2)

We pray as these gifts are shared among us:

3. Loving Teacher, you call us to live the Gospel of peace and justice,
We will live justly.
4. Loving Companion, you call us to be your presence in the world.
We will love tenderly.
5. Loving Prophet, you call us to speak truth to power.
We will walk with integrity in your abiding presence.

(Presider raises bread and cup)

This is the Bread and Cup of Life, through which we are nourished, and we nourish one another.

ALL: What we have heard with our ears, we will live with our lives; as we share communion, we will become communion, both Love's nourishment and Love's challenge.

All are welcome to receive at our Tables of Friendship!

Communion Song: **Imago Dei** by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan; Album: Listening People (© 2021).

<https://youtu.be/dCN4unX1K3I?si=u6ETUirb3gL8reTF> (lyric video)

Refrain: Imago Dei. The image of God is here.
Imago Dei. The likeness of God alive.

Holy because we are of God
We are all of God
Holy because we are of God
We are all of God

Siblings because we are of God
We are all of God
Siblings because we are of God
We are all of God

Descant: We belong to one another;
We belong

Together we pray to God as Jesus did:

6. O Holy One, you are within, around and among us.
We celebrate your many names.
Your wisdom come; your will be done,
Unfolding from the depths within us.
7. Each day you give us all that we need;
You remind us of our limits, and we let go.
You support us in our power, and we act with courage.
1. For you are the dwelling place within us,
The empowerment around us,
And the celebration among us, now and forever. Amen.

Closing Prayer

O Holy One, we long to open our hearts to you, to love you with all that we are, all that we have, and all that we are becoming by your grace. Your song of love is planted in our hearts. Its melody is rooted deeply. May Your Spirit lift our voices to sing your song for the transforming of our world. Amen.

Announcements

Blessing - *All are invited to extend your hands for our mutual blessing:*

2. Faithful and loving God: Bless each of us as we continue our journey to return to you once again, and come closer to who you have called us to be.
3. We make a +cross on our forehead as a sign of our commitment to follow The Way of Jesus. May we remain faithful to this commitment and challenge ourselves to become better persons, more closely in line with Jesus' teachings and ministry. Amen.

We go into this week, held together by the Source of All That Is, clothed in the nature of Jesus our Companion, and reinforced by the strength of +Wisdom-Spirit within us. Amen.

Closing Song: ***Turning of the World*** by Ruth Pelham; sung by Sara Thomsen © 2003.
https://youtu.be/empGgV8Usvk?si=DH7_R4D-FIaIzjU0 (no video)

Let us sing this song for the (turning) of the world
That we may (turn) as one

With every voice with every song
We will move this world along
And our lives will feel the echo of our (turning)

With every voice with every song
We will move this world along (x2)
And our lives will feel the echo of our (turning)
(Loving/love) (Healing/heal) (Dreaming/dream)

***Thank you for your courage to worship with us in a spirit of equality
and justice!***

***You are welcome to [invite a friend and join us](#) again to support this
Community with your presence and prayer.***

* Transformation Rite from *Black Liturgies*, Cole Arthur Riley (adapted)

**First Reading, Gospel: *Inclusive Lectionary* published by the Quixote Center;
Responsorial: (*Psalms for Praying* by Nan Merrill)