



Community of St. Bridget
an inclusive catholic experience

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time – February 9, 2025

World Marriage Day

World Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking (2/8)

Liturgist: Donna M. Mazzola



Water Lily Opening photo by D. Mazzola

Suggestion: *Please provide a piece of bread and cup of wine/juice, and a copy of this liturgy so that you can fully participate.*

Come in. Come into this place which we make special by our 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's fire, we proclaim the transformative power of God. Christ's Spirit is alive and living among us. May the fire of this light continue to shine! Amen.

Opening Song: **Just As You Are** – written and performed by Lea Morris ©2021

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r87UKwSYlJc> (no video; start at :10)

Just as you are without changing a thing
Just as you are I accept you
I see you, I hear you, I welcome you in
Just as you are, just as you are.

Our scripture readings today help us to see that the Divine Vision of the kingdom is one of grace, not worthiness. The invitation is to have faith; faith that we can do all things through the One who is the Source of Grace. We pray to serve in the unique ways we are called, as we begin our prayer in the name of the Divine: Source of All Being, Eternal Word and +Holy Spirit. Amen.

Transformation Rite

As we prepare to celebrate our love for Jesus, let us be open to the transformative power of his presence in our lives. O Holy One,

1. When we fear the demands that change may make on our lives,
Open us to the blessings of change.
2. When we struggle with the unknown and our lack of control,
Make us like brave infants willing to take their first step to enjoy the freedom of walking.
3. When we grow tired of using our gifts to benefit others,
Remind us that love begets love and brings about new peace.
4. When we fear what will be asked of us by following the call of Christ,
May Jesus' promise to be with us always strengthen us. Amen.

Gloria: ***Praise, Give Glory to God*** by Denise Pyles on *Creation of Love*, © 2010

<https://youtu.be/tA22QokvwPA?si=1gXks20MeRTt-8UC&t=25> (no video; begin 0:20)

Praise, praise, give glory to God! Nations, peoples, give glory!

Strong the love embracing us, faithful our God forever.

Alleluia, alleluia! (x3)

Opening Prayer

Faithful God, we open now to the mystery of Life, to Your amazing grace; You who are infinitely greater than words can express, and yet the intimate Heart of our hearts. Your love for us and all creation exceeds our capacity to imagine. Through our prayer today may we have clarity of vision, stand firm in Your power to transform, and see our part in the great unfolding of Your kingdom. Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD*

We experience the Spirit of Our Living God as we listen to the Scripture readings broken open and shared by all.

First Reading: Isaiah 6:1-8

A reading from the prophet Isaiah:

In the year that the Ruler Uzziah died, I saw the Holy One sitting on a throne, high and lofty. The hem of God's robe filled the Temple. Above, seraphim were in attendance. Each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they hovered. Calling out to one another, they cried, "*Holy, holy, holy is the God of the Cosmos, whose glory fills the earth.*" The threshold shook to its foundations at the sound, while the Temple began to fill with smoke.

Then I said, "Woe is me! I am doomed. For I am of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips. Yet my eyes have seen the Ruler of All, the God of the Cosmos."

Then one of the seraphim flew to me, holding a live coal which the creature had taken with tongs from the altar. With this, it touched my mouth and said, "Look, this has touched your lips. Your guilt has fled. Your misdeeds have been blotted out."

Then I heard the voice of God saying, "Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?" And I said, "Here I am, send me!"

The inspired words of the prophet, Isaiah. Amen.

Responsorial: Psalm 29

Cantor: *Glory to You, O God. Bless us with peace.*

Ascribe to God, O divine beings, ascribe to God glory and strength!
Give to God the glory due the Holy Name!
Adore the Beloved in holy splendor! **R**

God's voice is strong. God's voice is full of majestic beauty.
God's voice strikes with fire upon hearts of stone.
God's voice shakes the desert and unsettles us.
God's voice uproots oaks, stripping forests bare;
God uproots fear and strips egos bare. **R**

But in God's temple, and in the heart's chapel, all cry, "Glory!"
For the voice of God is still heard in every storm!
God remains God – always.
Give strength to Your people, O God.
Bless Your people with peace. **R**

Cantor: Alleluias

Second Reading – Gospel: Luke 4:38-44

A reading from the Holy Gospel attributed to Luke:

On leaving the synagogue, Jesus entered the house of Simon and his family. Simon's mother-in-law was in the grip of a high fever. They asked Jesus to help her.

Jesus stood over her and rebuked the fever. The fever left her. She got up immediately and "deaconed"⁺ to them, served them at table.

At sunset, people who had a variety of diseases were brought to Jesus. He laid hands on each and cured them. Demons departed from many, crying out as they did so, "You are the Chosen One of God!" Jesus rebuked them and forbade them to speak, for they knew he was the Messiah.

The next morning, Jesus left the house and went to a desert place. The crowds followed. When they found Jesus, they tried to keep him from leaving them. Jesus said, "I must proclaim the Good News of God's reign to other towns too. That is what I was sent to do."

And he preached in the synagogues throughout Judea.

The inspired words of the evangelist, Luke. Amen.

Cantor: Alleluias

Third Reading: Corinthians 15:1-11

A reading from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians:

Dear ones, I want to remind you of the gospel, the good news, I proclaimed to you. You made the gospel your own. You have taken your stand on it. If you hold firm to the word that I proclaimed to you, you will be free; you will not have believed in vain.

What I received I also passed on to you at the outset: that Jesus died as a servant of all, according to the Scriptures; that he was buried; that the Christ was raised on the third day, according to the Scriptures; that the risen Christ appeared [to Mary Magdalene]⁺⁺ and Peter, then to Jesus' closest followers; that the risen Christ later appeared to more than 500 of the disciples at the same time, most of whom are still living, although some have since died; that the risen Christ spent time with James and all the rest of the apostles who were commissioned to continue Jesus' good work; and that, last of all, the risen Christ appeared to me, as to one untimely born.

I am the least of all the apostles and don't even deserve to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God; but, by God's grace, I am what I am. This grace was not without effect, for I have reached out to the Gentiles more than all the others. Yet it was not I who did it, but God's grace that was in me. So, whether you heard it from me, or from the others, it's all the same. This is what we proclaim. This is what you believed.

The inspired words of Paul, the apostle. Amen.

Shared Homily: Donna Mazzola

The Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh teaches, “Most people are afraid of suffering. But suffering is a kind of mud to help the lotus flower of happiness grow. There can be no lotus flower without the mud.”

Today we hear about the major turning point in the lives of two people: the Prophet Isaiah and the Apostle Paul. Each of them owns up to ways that *they feel* they have muddied up their lives.

Isaiah’s moment happens in the Temple as incense burns. There, he has a vision of the Divine. In the presence of such glory and splendor, he feels unworthy and doomed. But the knowing Seraphim cleanses him of his doubts. When he hears the question, “Who will go for us?” he immediately responds, “Here I am. Send me.” What happens in that instant?

Paul’s account to the Corinthians has similarities. He notes the many appearances of the Risen Christ to close followers and later, to hundreds of other disciples. Paul confesses that, as one who persecuted the followers of The Way, he feels he doesn’t even deserve to be considered an apostle. He states his truth: I am what I am — a persecutor of Christ and through God’s grace, I am the one God chose to bring the Good News to the Gentiles. What happens to Paul?

When Isaiah is seized by Grace, he surrenders to the Holy. When Paul is seized by Grace, knocked off his horse, he surrenders to the Holy. Both place their gifts in service of a call greater than themselves, greater than their self-concerns. Only Love can do that.

When Jesus visits Simon Peter’s home, which by now he has done many times, Love moves him to heal Peter’s mother-in-law. Then, Love moves her to serve—to deacon to the guests in her home. Love creates ripples.

Ripples are evident in our world today. Lawmakers and faith leaders are emboldened to speak truth to power. Protesters are gathering to support the vulnerable and resist oppressive mandates. We witness small acts of kindness between strangers.

The image at the top of our worship aid shows a water lily, a lotus sitting on the water. Perhaps we are each called now, to be like the water lily. Out of the mud of our lives and these frightening times, to be a sign of beauty, goodness, and justice. May we continue to center Jesus’ work and God’s vision for a just

world for all. We pray for the courage to express our faith without fear and the grace to listen to what is ours to do.

You are invited to share what is rising in your hearts at this time.

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

5. We have faith
in one God, one Source of all life,
one Ground of the whole Earth,
who created all things good.

6. And we have faith
in Christ, in whom we have been shown the special role of humanity to
bear God's likeness in working and caring for Creation,
in seeking to understand her mysteries and powers,
in working with these powers for the wellbeing of life on Earth.

7. And we have faith
in God's Spirit who leads us to a meek, unselfish and
compassionate life-style.
So that the Earth is inherited in peace,
her life is transformed for all creatures and her bounty shared justly.
So be it. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

Knowing our God is faithful, generous, and abiding, let us bring to this Table our cares and concerns—for ourselves, our loved ones, and our world. Our response is: ***We awaken to your call.***

For whom and for what shall we pray?

God of the Cosmos, help us to discover how we can be most useful in bringing your message of love and inclusion to those we encounter daily. May we work unceasingly to be a reflection of your love and mercy, especially to those who have lost any hope that justice will exist for all of us. Amen.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Sign of Peace

As we prepare 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 (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 the Earth's fruits.

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

The Holy One is with us, abounding in Love!

1. We open our hearts in Christ, who lives and loves, heals and empowers through us, and give thanks to the Source of All Life.
2. O Loving God, you bring to birth the world of our dreams for mutual respect and partnership. Give us courage to act justly and work collaboratively to change systems that keep people poor and marginalized in our society.
3. We thank you for the women and men who are working for justice and equality in our church and world. Your gift of the Spirit gives us hope that one day, through our unselfish work in your vineyard, all will be living in peace and harmony within your Kindom.
4. With thankful hearts in the company of the angels, saints and all souls created in your love, O God of Abundance and Welcome, we praise you in song:

Holy Is Your Name clip from The Many © 2015

https://youtube.com/clip/UgkxpYCZ6OV7AmBIFEUNbSv5QVY7xpTeIN3N?si=mIu7Em_XgCwGA44A (no video; play 2x)

And I sing Holy, holy, holy is your name
And I say Glory, glory, glory to your name
The angels and the heavens sing
Of the new day that You bring
They sing Glory, glory, glory to your name (repeat)

5. Creator God, 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.
6. Sending among us Jesus, our Light and Hope, you birth afresh in our world the power of Sophia Wisdom, and in the gift of the Spirit, your creative goodness blooms anew, amid the variety and wonder of life.

ALL: Loving God, we celebrate your Spirit's +transformative energy within this bread and fruit of the vine given to nurture afresh in us the discerning gifts of wisdom, light and truth.

7. We remember all the courageous companions who have gone before us, the holy women and men who have lived lives of love and service in the midst of hatred, violence and injustice. They are ever-present with us at this Table of Friendship.

At this gathering, we take bread, as Jesus took bread, and we remember, as Jesus remembered, the constant presence of the Spirit of Life and Love. And Jesus offers this bread to us now, saying: **(All raise bread)**

ALL: *Take and eat, this is my very Self given to you.*

When supper ends, Jesus takes the cup, speaks the grace, and offers it to us now, saying: **(All raise cup)**

ALL: *Take and drink this cup of my life, 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 re-member me like this, I am among you.*

In sharing this bread and cup, let us embrace the Gospel of justice and peace as we proclaim:

ALL: Nurtured by your word, nourished by your food;
Called anew to be your people, we acclaim your praise!

1. As we celebrate this sacred meal, we recall the wise and gracious gifts bestowed on us down through the ages; and we look forward in hope, knowing that you, our wise and faithful God, will continue to endow us with abundant blessings.

(Raise bread and cup)

ALL: For it is through learning to live as Jesus lived,
And why he lived,
And for whom he lived,
That we awaken to your Spirit within,
Moving us to worship you truly,
Life-giving God,
At this time, and all time, and in all ways. **Cantor:** Amen

Communion Rite: *We pray as this bread is broken among us:*

In the power of this Eucharistic meal, O Divine Spirit, and in union with all peoples, we unite our thoughts and prayers, asking for wisdom and courage:

2. To discern more wisely the Spirit's call to us in the circumstances of our daily lives;
3. To act justly and courageously in confronting the pain and suffering that desecrates our Earth and its peoples;
4. To take risks in being creative and proactive on behalf of the poor and marginalized.

(Presider raises bread and cup)

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

ALL: We receive this bread and cup as the presence of Christ among us!

All are welcome to receive at our Tables of Friendship!

Communion: ***Heart of the World*** by Michael Gott; *Surrender* 2004 Gott Music, Inc.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfypR8t_tPo (no video- end 3:28)

The heart of the world beats in me now
 The light of the world shines through me
 The song of the world sings through me now
 I am the heart of the world (x2)

*Together we pray to God as Jesus did: ** (translated from the Aramaic):*

5. Abba, let our lives honor your name. Let your home be with us.
6. Let your ways be our ways. Let heaven and earth be one.
7. Give us today simply the bread of tomorrow.
1. Forgive us our violences as fully as we have forgiven others. Do not let us stumble; give us refuge from evil ways.
2. Yours, O God, is the place, power and the wonder. Peace now and forever. Amen.

Closing Prayer

O Heart of the world, beat in us now. Light of the world, shine through us now. Song of the world, sing through us now. For we, like Isaiah and Peter's mother-in-law, and Paul, have been touched by Your Spirit and seized by Your grace. Make us bread for this hungry world so in need of love and hope. Amen.

Announcements

Blessing: *Please extend your hands for our mutual blessing:*

Blessings of the dance be upon you.
Blessings of compassionate eyes and
of Earth's giving nature be upon you.
Blessings of the wisdom of this season be upon you.
Blessings of breathing freely be upon you.
Blessings of grace and of this moment be upon you.
And remain with you today and in the days to come.

ALL: Held together by Love Divine,
clothed with the nature of Jesus our Companion,
and reinforced by the strength of the +Holy Spirit,
we go forth in love and service to others. Amen.

Closing Song: ***Do Not Fear to Hope***, Rory Cooney, sung by Theresa Donohoo, *Change Our Hearts*, (1986).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zd2ZERJ9n5I> (lyric/video)

Refrain: Do not fear to hope though the wicked rage and rise.
Our God sees not as we see,
Success is not the prize.
Do not fear to hope, for though the night be long,
The race shall not be to the swift,
The fight not to the strong.

Look to God when victory
Seems out of justice's sight.
Look to God whose mighty hand
Brought forth the day from
The chaos of the night. **R**

Look to God when reason fails
And terror reigns in the night.
Look upon the crucified
And see beyond into Easter's dawning light. **R**

Hope is for a pilgrim people
Searching for a promised land.
Hope is like a rose in winter,
Or an open hand.
It celebrates the light of morning

While working in the dark and cold
It gathers us together
To share what we've been told. Oh... **R**

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

***You are welcome to bring a friend and join us again, supporting this
Community with your presence and prayer!***

* Readings taken from the *Comprehensive Catholic Lectionary* made available through the Women's Ordination Conference.

+ *The Greek word used by this evangelist was already, at the time the Gospel was written, a word describing a formal ecclesial office (deacon/ess). The audience would have heard the verb used in reference to Peter's mother-in-law in this context.*

***The CCL includes the gospel affirmation that Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene, although Paul never mentions her in his letters (see notes in CCL table). Your community can discern whether to include it. It would seem Paul had not heard the stories of Mary Magdalene now preserved in the gospels. Perhaps already in the time of Paul, there was a movement to eliminate her vital role as Apostle to the Apostles, Apostle of the resurrection.*

** Prayer of Jesus translated from the Aramaic taken from *How To Live: What the Rule of St. Benedict Teaches Us About Happiness, Meaning and Community* by Judith Valente © 2018.