



Community of St. Bridget
an inclusive catholic experience
Third Sunday of Easter – April 14, 2024
 Liturgist/Homilist: Donna M. Mazzola



Pinterest- theguardian.com

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

Welcome to the Community of St. Bridget. We make this gathering special by our presence, where the ordinary is sanctified, the human is celebrated, and the compassionate is expected. Together we make this a holy place with our every act of celebration.

ALL: Let us celebrate the richness and diversity of life, *ALLELUIA!*

Lighting of the Easter Candle

From the fire of the Easter Vigils celebrated throughout the world, to the St. Bridget flame of Ireland, to our Community gathered here, we light the fire of God's desire as prophets of a new vision of hospitality to welcome all to the Banquet Table of Infinite Love, as we dance the dance of Spirit embracing all.

Opening Song: **All One Heart**, Music, lyrics and Vocals by Melanie DeMore, from album In the Mother House

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpmjLB48MNg> (no video)

All one heart,
 Beat as one together
 Beat as one this moment. (x2)

All one song,
 Sing as one together
 Sing as one this moment.

Om nama
 Om nama shivaya (x2)

All one heart,
 Sing as one together
 Sing as one this moment.

Today we celebrate the Third Sunday of Easter. Our readings today tell of the disciples' encounters with the risen Christ. He is truly alive and tangible, in embodied form. As we celebrate this Eucharistic gathering, let us help each other recognize the Risen One in our midst. May our hearts beat as one together with resurrected hope as we call on the name of the Divine: Source of All Being, Eternal Word, and +Holy Spirit. Amen.

Affirmation of Baptism

In this Easter Season, we celebrate and reaffirm the Christian initiation of our Baptism with the signing of baptismal waters-- reminding and reaffirming our commitment to the Holy Spirit in our lives. As we come together today to celebrate Eucharist, we affirm this initiation by blessing ourselves with the sacred water from our Earth as we sing:

**Cantor: *We shall draw water joyfully, singing joyfully, singing joyfully!
 We shall draw water joyfully from the wellsprings of God's mercy!***

God has untied the knots that bind us, and through this life-giving water and living Spirit among us, brought us to life anew. May this spirit-filled grace renew us as we embrace the promise of eternal life in God's Presence. Amen.

Gloria: by Denise Pyles from Creation of Love, © 2010-03-19

[Praise, Give Glory to God - YouTube](#) (begin at .18; no video)

*Praise, praise! Give glory to God. Nations, peoples, give glory!
 Strong the love embracing us. Faithful our God forever.
 Hallelujah, hallelujah! (repeat)*

Opening Prayer:

1. O Holy One, it is good news indeed that there is no hiding from the Risen One. He comes to us breathing the Spirit into our unbelieving hearts and offering us a peace and mercy which surpasses all understanding:

2. ...the peace of renewed purpose, of a blessed unrest, of realizing that the Easter story is about our own resurrection after all, and that there is work to be done:

ALL: ...proclaiming God's love, healing the brokenhearted, speaking out for creation, and above all, opening to the evolving push and pull of Spirit's call. Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD*

*Our Living Spirit rejoices as these words of Scripture
are broken open and shared by all!*

First Reading: Acts 3:13a, 18

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles:

Peter said, "It is the God of Sarah and Abraham, Rebecca and Isaac, Leah and Rachel and Jacob, the God of our ancestors, who has glorified Jesus.

"You are the heirs of the prophets, the heirs of the Covenant the Most High made with our ancestors when God told Sarah and Abraham, 'In your offspring all the families of the earth will be blessed.' It was for you that God raised up and sent this Jesus, to bless you.

The inspired words of the writer of the Acts of the Apostles. Amen.

Responsorial: Psalm 4:1-8, (*Psalms for Praying* by Nan Merrill, adapted)

Cantor: *Fill us with Love. Dwell with us.* (x2)

Answer us when we call, O Beloved.
Envelop us in Love when we are in distress.
Be gracious to us now. Hear our prayer. **R**

Remember, the Beloved dwells
with those who are filled with Love,
and hears when our hearts cry out.
Though we may tremble, do not give in to fear. **R**

Though you weep bitterly within your hearts,
and wail upon your beds, commune with the Heart of your hearts.
Rest and be in silence.
Make peace with your fears. Trust in Love. **R**

Alleluia by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan and the River's Voice

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/hUtb30LhoWM> (no video)

*Alleluia! The Word of God is living!
Alleluia! The Gospel is among us! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

Gospel Reading: Mk 16:13-14; Lk 24:35-48

A reading from the Holy Gospels according to Mark and Luke:

After the risen Jesus appeared to his disciple, Mary Magdalene, he appeared in another form to two other disciples walking along on their way to the country. They returned and told the others; but they did not believe them either. ...

While the disciples were still talking about the reports of Jesus appearing to some of their number, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. Jesus said to them, "Why are you troubled? Why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

After saying this, he showed them his hands and feet. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence.

He said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and in the prophets and psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. And he said to them, "Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for forgiveness, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things."

The inspired words of the evangelists, Mark and Luke. Amen.

Contemporary Reading: Vision and Viewpoint, April 2, 2024: *a weekly e-newsletter*, by Joan Chittister

An excerpt from *In Search of Belief* by Joan Chittister:

Resurrection testifies to the metamorphosis of the Jesus of history to the Christ of faith. It is about coming to grips with the transformed and transforming presence of Christ then, now, and always. Once that happens, life is never again the same. Life begins anew.

To say, “I believe in Jesus Christ...who rose from the dead,” then, is to say I believe that the Resurrection goes on and on and on forever. Every time Jesus rises in our own hearts in new ways, the Resurrection happens again. Every time we see Jesus where we did not recognize him before—in the faces of the poor, in the love of the unloved, in the revelatory moments of life, Jesus rises anew. But that is not all. The real proof of the Resurrection lies not in the transformation of Jesus alone, but the transformation awaiting us who accept it.

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

Homily/Reflection: Donna M. Mazzola

After the death of Jesus, his followers are troubled. They have doubts. Mary of Magdala and the disciples on the road try to explain, Jesus is alive. But it's too tough to fathom. Then, in the midst of their disbelief, Jesus shows up and greets them, “Peace be with you. Why are you troubled, why the doubts? Come, touch me; my hands, my feet, see for yourself. It is me.” What's more, he asks for something to eat. And before their eyes, he consumes broiled fish. He has a body.

The appearances of the Risen Christ that we are hearing about for the third week now—these accounts of his resurrection—are not only about the transformation of Jesus. These events are transforming his followers, one by one. An encounter with Him ignites a slow burning in their hearts. He is rising in their hearts in new ways. And they are no longer the same.

This experience also belongs to us. We were not there, yet somehow, we are rooted in this same faith. Why? It's because *we too have a story*—our own encounter with the living Christ. *We too believe because we see. We too witness* the signs of hope, moments of recognizing the living Christ in people's faces and hearts. Moments of truth-telling and reparation. Moments of forgiveness and reunion, of disarmament and peace-making, like these:

The descendent of an enslaved person meets the descendent of a slave-owner. Each tells the other their story. They weep and embrace when they meet on the land her ancestors worked, the plantation his ancestors owned.

Palestinian and Israeli teens use art, rap, song, and dance to rage for peace, for a new way of living together.

A space is made in Canada for survivors of Indian Residential Schools to finally speak their truth and be heard. It is only the beginning, but First Nations, Inuit, and Metis Peoples are telling their perspective of history.

Listening means recognizing the beauty and wisdom of Indigenous ways of seeing and caring for creation.

Those we encounter bear the presence of Christ. And we recognize Jesus in the faces and bodies of the suffering, voiceless, wounded, and burdened. Then he shows us there's another way. We can rise up and heal each other.

Recently, during a morning walk, on a path that I have taken over 100 times, I noticed the bark of a sweet gum tree. I stopped. At eye level I saw a heart-shaped knot. It's been there all along, yet I've never noticed it before. As I continued to walk, the image of the knot worked on me. Why hadn't I noticed it before? Suddenly I could see what I didn't see before. What changed? It was happening to me. I was in it, like the total eclipse visible to many of us in North America and other locations. We had read all about it ahead of time, but being in it was dumbfounding. *Being in it meant experiencing it.* And it is in the seeing, *in the recognizing*, that we are transformed. If I could see the heart of that sweet gum, then maybe I have the capacity to recognize the heart of Christ in everyone and everything. This is how transformation happens.

You're invited to share where or how you recognize the Christ in your ordinary life.

Holding all our shared thoughts in the sacred space among us, let us now proclaim our affirmation of faith:

Affirmation of Faith:

3. We believe in the Holy One, a Divine Mystery beyond all definition and rational understanding, the heart of all that has ever existed, that exists now, or that ever will exist.
4. We believe in Jesus, messenger of the Divine Word, bringer of healing, heart of Divine compassion, bright star in the firmament of the Holy One's prophets, mystics, and saints.
5. We believe that we are called to follow Jesus as a vehicle of Divine love, a source of wisdom and truth, and an instrument of peace in the world.
6. We believe in the Spirit of the Holy One, the life that is our innermost life, the breath moving in our being, the depth of living in each of us.

7. We believe that the Compassion and Companionship of Jesus is here and now, stretched out all around us to empower those with eyes to see it, hearts to receive it, and hands to make it happen. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

Ever present Creator: Redeeming Word: Ruah, Breath of Life, we stand present at our Tables holding our blessings, cares, and concerns. We ask that your healing power become a cleansing balm upon the Spirit within us, our families, our country, our leaders, and our world. After each request, we respond:

Risen Jesus, we awaken to your call!

For whom or for what shall we pray?

All knowing and ever living Source of Light, we give back to you what you have so graciously given to each of us. We trust that by breaking open our hearts, our lives will bear fruit. We hope that by following Jesus' lead, we will fall in love with the Spirit that dwells within us and thereby love all whom we touch. Seed of Compassion, hold these prayers, and the prayers hidden deep within our hearts not yet ready to surface, within your ever-loving embrace. Amen.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Sign of Peace

As we prepare for the 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 risen brother, Jesus, offers be always with us! Amen.

Offertory (All raise the 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 One, giver of the gifts we bring, receive them from all those gathered here today, affirming the sacrament of your Presence among us.

1. Holy Mystery, may our strength be renewed by your generous blessings that will bring us health of mind and body. Grant that the healing work which you have begun in the life, death, and rising again of Jesus, bring us to eternal life in Your Presence. We ask this through Jesus, our brother. Amen.

The Holy One is with us, abounding in Love!

2. 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.

3. We praise you, O God of wonder and life, with greater joy than ever during this Easter Season, as we celebrate Jesus' life and ministry as witness to the life of compassion and love we are all called to live. As the universe resounds with Easter joy, we lift up our hearts with the choirs of angels and sing this endless hymn of your glory:

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!

4. 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.
 5. 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.
6. 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: *Take and eat, all of you. This is my very Self, the Bread of Life given to strengthen you. (All raise bread)*

Jesus then raised a cup of blessing, spoke the grace, and offers it to us now, saying:

ALL: *Take and drink of this Cup of my life-blood, the Covenant made new again through my life in you. Whenever you remember me like this, I am among you. (All raise cup)*

We raise our voices to the sacred presence of our Loving God:

ALL: In every creature that has ever breathed, *Christ has lived*
 In every living being that has passed on before us, *Christ is transformed*
 In our breaking open the word and the bread, *Christ is with us still!*
 In everything yet to be, *Christ will come again.*

(All 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! (x2)

Communion Rite - We pray as this bread and cup are shared among us:

7. Loving God, you call us to live the Gospel of peace and justice.
We will live justly.
1. Loving God, you call us to be your presence in the world.
We will love tenderly.
2. Loving God, you call us to speak truth to power.
We will walk with integrity in your presence.

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

ALL: We share this bread and fruit of the vine today committing ourselves to

be Easter people, people who see beyond the barriers, the pain, the darkness and hard times, people who live in faith, hope and love in all the seasons of our lives whatever the ups and downs.

All are welcome to receive at our Tables of Friendship!

Communion Meditation: Rise Up by The Many; Music: Hannah Rand & Lyrics: Lenora Rand

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

Ever feel like nothing's gonna get any better?
Ever feel like nothing's right and you can't change a thing?

Refrain

But then one day	Rise up
The stone is rolled away	And give like there's enough to go
And Jesus rises up to show us	around
There's another way	Rise up
We can rise up,	And be the change that we need
And live like there's hope to be	We can rise up, and be
found	Holy... alleluia (<i>repeat</i>)

Ever feel like no one cares about the ones that have no voice?
Ever feel like you go along 'cuz you don't have much choice?

Refrain

We pray to God as Jesus did: (An adaptation for our times by Lenora Rand)

3. God of Love, who we experience as mother, father, friend, lover,
our deepest longing, our best thought our solid ground, the sacred soil
from which everything grows, our greatest hope.
4. Your love covers the entire earth, holding us all in your embrace.
You hold everything together.
We want to know what your vision for the world is - help us.
We want to live in that vision - guide us.
5. Everything we eat and drink, everything that gives us life and joy,
it all comes from you.
We want to thank you for your mercy. You hold nothing back.
Help us be that open and generous with others and with ourselves.
Help us forgive each other.

6. Deep in our hearts we believe that this is your world and that you love us all. Help us live with you and with each other in that powerful love. And together we will sing of your mercy and grace and power, forever and ever. Amen.

Closing Prayer

7. O Risen One, breathe on us, set us on fire and send us out, that we might rise from our graves of fear and go forth boldly as your Easter people.

1. May our faith be not in our words but in our lives, not in what we say but in who we are, passing on your love like an infectious laugh:

ALL: ...not worried, not threatening, just shining like the sun, like a starry night, like a lamp on a stand, a light for life. Amen.

Announcements

Blessing – Our Risen Christ is in, through and among us! **ALL:** Alleluia!

Let us extend hands to one another for our mutual blessing**:

2. Now, we listen for the rattling of new life, your spirit moving among the valleys of distraction, weaving sinews of significance, building the muscle of meaning, fashioning the tendons of connections.
3. We hear the sound of our becoming the resurrected body of Christ, born of the union of desires: ours, to be Christ's resurrected body in this age, and yours, that we might find our soul's purpose.
4. We open to you, arising new in every moment, our life, and our hope in the unfolding future, emerging from our deep commitment to the present. Amen.

(chanted) Go in the peace of Christ, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Cantor: *(chanted)* **Thanks be to God, Alleluia, Alleluia!**

Closing Hymn: ***We Shall Be Known*** words & music by Karisha Longaker of MaMuse ©
<https://youtu.be/k4xhQcgyoLk?si=cRqZZRujHEOi8bFd> (no video)

We shall be known by the company we keep
 By the ones who circle round to tend these fires
 We shall be known by the ones who sow and reap
 The seeds of change, alive from deep within the earth

It is time now, it is time now that we thrive
 It is time we lead ourselves into the well
 It is time now, and what a time to be alive
 In this Great Turning we shall learn to lead in love (2x)

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

***You are welcome to join us again and support this Community
 with your presence and prayer.***

- * First Scripture reading taken and adapted from the Inclusive Lectionary, Cycle B, published by the Quixote Center, MD
 Psalm verses from Nan Merrill, *Psalms for Praying*.
 Second Scripture reading taken from the Comprehensive Catholic Lectionary made available through the Women's Ordination Conference.
 ***If Darwin Prayed* by Bruce Sanguin, "Plan Be" (adapted)

