

Mary Mother of Jesus Inclusive Catholic Community
Liturgy: Third Sunday of Advent, Dec. 11, 2021



Liturgical Team:

Presiders: Jill Striebinger and Bridget Mary Meehan

Readers: Pat and Bob Ferkenhoff

Prayer Leaders: Mary Montavon, Jack McKillop and Joan Pesce

Music Minister: Linda Lee Miller

IT: Peg Bowen and Jerry Bires

Theme: Prepare the Way for Christ by joyful-giving, truth-telling
and justice-doing

JILL: A warm welcome to Mary Mother of Jesus Inclusive Catholic Community, where all are invited to celebrate Eucharist. We invite you to pray the liturgy and respond aloud and muted where it says “ALL.” All participants will be muted during the liturgy except for the presiders and readers. Please have bread and wine/juice nearby as we pray our Eucharistic prayer.

Advent Candle Lighting Blessing Prayer

JILL: Like our ancestors, we honor the cycles and the seasons that remind us of the ever-changing flow of life. We light this third candle and remember that in the heart of every person on this earth, and in all of creation there burns the spark of luminous goodness – the presence of the Divine.

JILL and All: Let us kindle the light of joy!

Pause to light the candle.

JILL: Let us welcome the light of Christ within each other! Please join in singing our opening song: Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord from Godspell.

"Prepare Ye" ~ Godspell (1973)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSIs1MHdFQY&t=16s>

Reconciliation Rite (Bridget Mary)

Let's recall our failures to love self and others as Christ loves us.

Pause for several moments as you place hand over your heart

BMM and All: I'm sorry. I forgive you. I love you. Thank you.

Gloria: Linda Lee Miller

https://youtu.be/dgn_8q1UWwk

ALL Sing: Glory to God, glory, O praise God, alleluia, Glory to God, glory, O praise the name of our God (3 times)

Opening Prayer: BMM

Let us pray:

Holy One, we dismiss all anxiety from our minds and receive the peace that is beyond all understanding. We rejoice in your passionate love for us, and trust in divine wisdom within us to guide us to serve those in need. Today we celebrate the appearance of Our Lady of Guadalupe to Juan Diego as a divine mother figure who cares for the sufferings of indigenous people. We awaken to your liberating grace bubbling up in the oppressed for justice. May we do all we can to make our world a better home for the hungry and homeless, the least and last among us by loving large.

ALL: Amen

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Reader: Bob Ferkenhoff

Our first reading is from the book of the prophet Zephaniah 3:14-18

Shout for joy, O Zion!

Sing joyfully, O Israel.

Be glad and exult with all your heart,

Your God is in your midst.

Your God rejoices over you with gladness,

And renews you in love.

Your God sings joyfully because of you, as one sings at festivals.
These are the inspired words of the prophet Zephaniah and we respond
ALL: Thanks be to God.

(Pause for silent reflection)

Sung Response Love Large by Earth Mama – video by Deven Horne and Mary Theresa Streck
<https://youtu.be/-eY8ChWMoJg>

Reader: Pat Ferkenhoff

A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice always! I say: it again: Rejoice! Let everyone see your forbearing spirit. Christ is near. Dismiss all anxiety from your minds; instead, present your needs to God through prayer and petition, giving thanks in all circumstances. Then all God's own peace, which is beyond all circumstances will stand guard over your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

These are the inspired words from Paul, and we respond.
Pat and ALL: Thanks be to God.

(Pause for silent reflection)

Alleluia (eightfold)

<https://youtu.be/IC4nbwmQDVw>

JILL Striebinger: A Reading from the Holy Gospel According to Luke (3: 10-18)

The crowds asked John, "What should we do?" John replied: "Let the one with two coats share with the one who has none. Let those with food do the same.

Tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to John, "Teacher, what are we to do? John answered them, "Exact nothing over and above your fixed amount." Soldiers, likewise asked, "What about us? John told them, "Do not bully anyone. Do not accuse anyone falsely. Be content with your pay."

The people were full of anticipation, wondering whether John might be the Messiah. John answered them all by saying: "I am baptizing you with water, but someone is coming who is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not fit to even untie. This one will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire. A winnowing fan is in his hand to clear the threshing floor and gather the wheat into the granary. Using exhortations of this sort, John proclaimed the Good News to the people. These are the inspired words of the evangelist Luke and we respond

JILL and All: Thanks be to God.

(Pause for silent reflection)

HOMILY STARTER: Jill

In Advent, we celebrate the creative presence of God in Mary and in the birth of the Christ Presence within us, for us and through us. Mary's joy today comes from a release of judgment from others and especially from herself. She has joy because she is able to birth Jesus free from the anxiety that societal norms placed upon her. She is truly free and joyful!

Our tradition tells us that Mary is the immaculate conception. What does that really mean?

Unlike the theory on original sin that St. Augustine presented and the institutional Church still teaches, we are not born with a sinful nature. We are born perfect but into a society that remains blind to that perfection and seeks to impose its view on every minute of our existence, until like Mary, we choose not to buy into this view, this view born of generational trauma and the systemic wrongs built into society. Mary was born immaculate in the minute she said 'YES' to God and chose not to be defined by anyone else. If we do not give Mary a choice then Jesus cannot be born.

Mary was indeed blessed because she received and cooperated with God's creative power. Mary was given a choice to birth and become a mother. And because she, herself, was already birthed into a paradigm where she was able to see, to transcend, the sins of the world, and because her human body was capable, she was able to say a big and joyful YES! This should also be the grounds to eliminate any doctrine that supports punishing women who choose abortion with excommunication as it is our failings as a society, not to make this world safe and our collective failings to not wholeheartedly support the journeys of all mothers.

Mary's story can be our story too. Mary birthed herself in that moment when she accepted to carry Jesus to term because she was clear enough to know that this was what God asked of her. Mary was indeed blessed because she received and cooperated with God's creative power. Like

Mary, we are called to live our lives pregnant with possibilities to give birth to Christ each day.

Advent is a reminder for us to release, to let go of the man-made ideas about ourselves that hold us back from saying:

YES to God,

YES, I am worthy of this task, and

YES I will cooperate with God's creative, pregnant power in me, working through me and for me.

How each of us becomes free enough to say YES to God is dependent on our culture, are we safe, accepted, and supported? I wonder if that frankincense and myrrh were given to help with Mary's postpartum bodily changes and emotions, as frankincense is good to heal skin and their medicinal properties, when combined, increase their effectiveness exponentially. When

used as incense, they alleviate anxiety and uplift one's mood at the same time. Do frankincense and myrrh represent Mary and Jesus? Both equally effective but when combined together, work exponentially more gloriously? Was the gold also used to help the family to be able to afford to care for Jesus so that he could really fulfill his destiny? It is apparent that Mary had individual and community support to raise Jesus. We know that Joseph had agreed to help her and that the wider community offered support, including the wealthy in the form of the gifts from the three kings. What if everyone believes that all children are born perfect, images of God, and that each child could grow to be much greater than their individual potential if we provided solid support for their mothers too? Would we help their mothers then?

Let us celebrate all the types of caregiving roles that are illustrated in the Christmas story. Mary for direct care, Joseph for supporting her needs so she can provide direct care, and society in the form of the three kings who generously made sure that they had medicine or healthcare (Frankincense and Myrrh) and money (gold) to raise this beautiful child.

We're also celebrating the feast of Our Lady of Guadeloupe today. In this apparition Mary appeared as a pregnant mother. Her story lies within this one and all stories of birthing and caregiving that lift up the lowly with a mother's sense of compassion and justice. Please share any reflections that came to you during the liturgy thus far.

SHARED HOMILY: Community

STATEMENT OF FAITH: (Jack M. & All)

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.

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.

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.

We believe in the Spirit of the Holy One,
the life that is our innermost life,
the breath moving in our being,
the depth living in each of us.

We believe that the Divine kin-dom is here and now,
stretched out all around us for those
with eyes to see it, hearts to receive it,
and hands to make it happen.

A few moments of silence before we bring our community prayers and offerings to the table.

PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY

Mary M:

As we prepare for this sacred meal, we are aware that we are called to all we can to make our world more just and equitable. As messengers of hope and joy, we bring to this table our blessings, cares and concerns. Please feel free to voice your intentions beginning with the words, "I bring to the table."

Our response is Christ, you graciously hear us!

JOAN M: MMOJ Book of Intentions

Please share your spontaneous prayers.

Mary M: We give thanks for all whom we held in the circle of grace and will continue to pray for and serve. Amen.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS

BMM:

Blessed are you, God of all Life. Through your goodness we offer these gifts: bread, wine, our lives and the lives of those we love.

ALL: Blessed be God Forever.

EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

Joan P: God dwells in you.

JOAN P. and ALL: And also in you.

Joan P: Lift up your hearts.

JOAN P and ALL: We lift them up in the Christ Presence everywhere.

Joan P: Let us give thanks to the Holy One.
JOAN P and ALL: Amen.

PRAYER LEADER: Joan P.

Creator of heaven and earth, all beings are filled with joy. With the angels and saints, we rejoice in dawning of the sacred promise of God's Anointed, fulfilled in Jesus, the Christ as we sing.

Holy, Holy: Linda Lee Miller

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=orKBBIj5LZA>

PRAYER LEADER: Mary M:

O Beloved of our Hearts, you rejoice over us with gladness." May we have the wisdom to accept your faith in us and the strength to live your compassion in the world. May we serve you in the last and the least.

(Pause for silent reflection)

PRAYER LEADER Jack M:

As we wait with joyful hearts for the fulfillment of your loving presence in our lives, we remember the prophet, martyrs and saints who have gone before us: Deborah, Isaiah, Mary of Magdala, Peter, Martha, Bishop Oscar Romero, Ita Ford, Maura Clark, Jean Donovan, Dorothy Day and all prophets of justice who inspire us today. (Community names mentors they want to remember, living and dead.)

PRAYER LEADER Joan P:

O Compassionate Teacher, accompany us on the road to healing and wholeness as we break down walls that separate and divide us. May we prepare the way for a new birthing of your love by our generous service to the least and last among us as we pray:

(Extend hands in blessing toward bread and wine for *Epiclesis*:
Invocation of the Holy Spirit.)

PRESIDER: BMM and ALL:

Come Holy Spirit deepen your Presence within us and in these gifts of bread and wine.

(Pause for silent reflection)

BMM and ALL: (all lift bread)

On the night before he died, Jesus gathered at the table with his friends, he spoke the blessing, broke the bread and shared it with them saying:

Take and eat of the Bread of Life, whenever you remember me like this, I am among you.

(Pause for silent reflection)

JILL and ALL: (all lift cup)

Jesus then raised a cup of blessing, spoke the grace saying:

Take and drink of the covenant

Made new again through my life in you.

Whenever you remember me like this,

I am among you.

(Pause for silent reflection)

JILL and ALL:

As we share this bread and cup, we proclaim: Christ dies, Christ rises and Christ comes again and again.

PRAYER LEADER Joan P:

O Emmanuel, God-with-us, may we open hearts to generous giving, truth-telling and justice doing each day. You are the Love that dwells in our depths, the Wisdom that speaks within us and the Divine Passion makes us all one.

(Community members hold their plates and cups as they pray the Doxology)

PRAYER LEADER: Mary M.

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in union with the Holy Spirit, all glory is yours, gracious God.

The Great Amen. Linda Lee Miller

<https://youtu.be/0sDDgwZlijc>

COMMUNION RITE

THE PRAYER OF JESUS

Jack M. and ALL: Let us pray as Jesus taught.

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.
Each day you give us all we need.
You remind us of our limits, and we let go.
You support us in your power, and we act with courage.
For you are the dwelling place within us, the empowerment around us,
And the celebration among us, now and forever. Amen
(Adapted, Miriam Therese Winter, MMS)

Sign of Peace:

JILL: Let us sing "Peace is flowing like a River" by Carey Laundry as we pray for peace and justice to spread through our world.

<https://youtu.be/ob6HgTQ6lZ4>

LITANY FOR THE BREAKING OF BREAD

BMM: Please join in the prayer for the breaking of the bread:
(Community breaks the bread)

BMM and ALL:

O God of Courage, You call us to live the Gospel of peace and justice. We will live justly.
O God of Compassion, You call us to be Your presence in the world. We will love tenderly.
O God of Truth, You call us to speak truth to power. We will walk with integrity in your presence.

(Community raises bread and wine)

JILL:

This is the bread of life and the cup of blessing. Through it we are nourished and we nourish each other. All are welcome to the Feast. Eat and drink and delight in Christ's Presence.

Communion Meditation : Our Lady of Guadalupe Hymn

<https://youtu.be/WhR2VCxurvw>

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

BMM:

Nourished at this table with the Bread of Life and Cup of Blessing, may we rejoice that God delights in us and renews us in living the Christ Presence everyday. Like Mary, mother of Jesus and John the Baptist, may we be empowered by the Spirit in our actions toward others. May we “love large” as we serve the Body of Christ broken among us in our homes, streets and world. May we prepare the way for Christ by joyful-giving truth-telling and justice doing.
BMM. And ALL: Amen.

Prayers of Gratitude, Introductions, Announcements

CONCLUDING RITE

JILL: The Holy One dwells within us and works through us to create a more just world for the excluded and marginalized.

JILL and ALL: And empowers all people on the margins!

BLESSING

(ALL: Extend your hands in mutual blessing)

BMM and ALL: May the God of Sarah and Abraham bless us;

May the God of Jesus and Our Lady of Guadalupe bless us;

May the God of all our people bless us; and empower us in our work for a more equitable world.

ALL: Amen

DISMISSAL

JILL: Go in joy, let the celebration continue!

JILL and ALL: Thanks be to God.

CONCLUDING HYMN

Prepare the Way · Christopher Walker

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MwQlReZaz0E>

Refrain:

Prepare the way for the coming of God.

Make a straight path for the coming of God.

Prepare the way for the coming of God.

Make a straight path for the coming of God.

I

Ev'ry valley fill it in,
Every mountain make it small.
Ev'ry valley fill it in,
Every mountain make it small.

II

Crooked pathways make it straight.
All the rough land make it smooth.
Crooked pathways make it straight.
All the rough land make it smooth.

III

All will see, God's power strong
God has promised glory comes.
All will see, God's power strong
God has promised glory comes.

If you want to add a prayer intention to our MMOJ Community Prayer book, please send an email to Joan Meehan. jmeehan515@aol.com

If you want to invite someone to attend our liturgy, please refer them our website at MaryMotherofJesus.org

To support our community, please send your check to:
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