



Mary Mother of Jesus Inclusive Catholic Community
First Sunday of Lent, February 17, 2024
Presiders: Joan Meehan and Elena Garcia ARCWP
Lectors: Jerry and Suzanne Bires
Prayer Leader: Jeanne Schmidt
Music Minister: Linda Lee Miller
I-Team: Cheryl Brandi

Theme: Lent a Season of Conversion- A Call to Radical Transformation

(Joan): We warmly welcome you to the inclusive Catholic Community of Mary Mother of Jesus in Sarasota. All are welcome here. We invite you to pray the liturgy where it says “All.” Everyone will be muted during the service. Presiders, readers and anyone wishing to participate in the shared homily, please remember to unmute and remute before and after reading or speaking in order to avoid confusion and overlap of voices. Please have bread and wine or juice with you as we pray our Eucharistic Prayer.

Whoever you are,
 Wherever you are,
 Just as you are,
 You are welcome at this table. (*Integral Christianity by Paul Smith*)

Admonition

Kindred, lend your ears, set your sights, awaken your hearts!
 Lent's rending work has begun.
 Your veiled life is destined for the Spirit's tearing.
 Not for your woe, but for your weal; not for your injury, but for your delivery.
 The discomfort caused by Lent's disciplines, prayer, fasting, almsgiving—is like that of the soil's disturbance, the necessary rupture as preparation for receiving the seed.
 Trek with Jesus into the wilderness of risky provision.
 Venture into the wilderness of your own heart and habitation,
 where demons are wrestled and angels attend.
 Sustenance for this perilous journey entails a departing blessing.

As you enter this feral landscape, hear Heaven's assurance—
as did Jesus, in Jordan's penitential wake, that YOU ARE BELOVED.

(Elena) Today's readings help us to focus our attention on covenant commitment which bears God given support to endure and carry the light of Hope to all generations. We are made aware of water as an element of positive power as well as destruction. Wilderness encompasses the presence of wild creatures and is protected by angels, authorities and powers all subject to The Holy One. The Gospel very simply alerts us to the reality that Jesus, having heard and listened, responded to the call and embarked on a ministry for which he had been preparing and strengthened by prayer and fasting. Transformation is the process that prepares us all, and lent is a means to achieve this transformation. And so we begin our season of lent together, summoned, in the name of the Holy One, Source of all Being; Jesus, Eternal Word; and Holy Spirit Sophia, our Wisdom within. Amen.

Gathering Song:

Bless Now O God the Journey

<https://youtu.be/jT42Jfx9vdA?si=IYCqNN95PIFoaJOV>

Opening Prayer

(Elena): Holy One, you moved Jesus to go out into the wilderness for forty days encountering wild animals and accompanied by angels who protected him. This experience was a preparation and orientation to what he would soon experience in his commitment to follow you. These are times in which we also find ourselves somewhat confounded by the personal and universal problems we are called to endure and to solve. Just as you revealed your presence to Jesus in the waters of the Jordan, today you reveal your presence in each one of us. Like Jesus we too can be transformed into sparks of love committed to bearing fruit that will last.

Transformation Rite

(Joan): We pause now to remember the times we have not born fruit in our lives and our service to others. Take a moment to recall one missed opportunity, one broken or damaged relationship. Now imagine this person or situation in the light of healing love as we ask for forgiveness.

(Pause briefly. Then Extend arm over community)

All: Please forgive me, I am sorry, I love you, I thank you.

The Sign of Peace

(Elena) It is fitting that, having asked for Divine and mutual forgiveness, we now extend an expression of Peace to each other.

(Elena and All): Grant us Your peace, O Loving God, that following the example of Jesus and with the strength of the Spirit, we may be eager to spread that love and peace to everyone, everywhere, with no exceptions. All: Amen.

(Elena) Let us turn to each other and with praying hands offer one another a sign of peace.

NAMASTE 3x

All: Eternal wellspring of peace-

*May we be drenched with the longing for peace
That we may give ourselves over
As the earth to the rain, to the dew,
Until peace overflows our lives
As living waters overflow the seas. (Marcia Falk)*

Liturgy Of The Word

(Jerry B) First Reading Genesis 9:8-15

Then God Spoke to Noah and his sons: "I'm setting up my covenant with you, including your children who will come after you, along with everything alive around you—birds, farm animals, wild animals ----- that came out of the ship with you. I'm setting up my covenant with you that never again will everything living be destroyed by floodwaters; no, never again will a flood destroy the Earth."

God continued, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and everything living around you and everyone living after you. I am putting my rainbow in the clouds, a sign of the covenant between me and the Earth. From now on when I form a cloud over the Earth and the rainbow appears in the cloud, I'll see it and remember the eternal covenant between God and everything living, every last living creature on Earth."

These are inspired words found in the Book of Genesis and we respond: **So BE IT!**

Responsorial Psalm: #95 El Shaddai, O Holy One – Jann Aldredge Clanton
<https://youtu.be/uA6uAA5fpc0?si=V5LUFb9I3VI6i9cX>

(Jerry and All) Show me the right path O Holy One, point out the road for me to follow.

(Suzanne B) Second Reading: A Reading from "Preaching the New Lectionary"

One would think that a God as magnificent and powerful as ours would not need intermediaries. Or if they were used, they would be of greater value than bushes in a mountainous wilderness or hired hands in orchards. Yet that is just the way God seems to work. God uses whatever or whoever is at hand. This is true whether it is an element of the natural world that is normally indifferent toward human beings or an uncomplicated person whose only concern is to do her or his job well, or an individual who has been thrust by circumstances into the limelight. In every life there are those who speak for or act in the place of God. Lent is a time given us to discern who these people or things are. Who communicates God to us? Who intercedes for us before the Holy One? On the other hand, in whose life do we act as emissary? How do we reveal to others the message of God we have received? How do we intercede on behalf of them? The challenge here is to listen to the messengers who bring us the name of God, even if it is not clearly defined.

These are the inspired words of Dianne Bergant, professor of biblical studies at Catholic Theological Union, and we affirm them by saying, **Amen.**

Gospel Acclamation: **Spirit of the Living God:** <https://youtu.be/nkATdLfKufE>

(Joan M) Gospel Mark 1:12-15

At once, that same Spirit pushed Jesus out into the wild. For forty wilderness days and nights he was tested by Satan. Wild animals were his companions, and angels took care of him. After John

was arrested, Jesus went to Galilee preaching the Message of God: “ Time’s up! God’s kingdom is here. Change your life and believe the Message.”

These are the inspired words attributed to Mark the evangelist and we respond: AMEN

Spirit of the Living God: <https://youtu.be/nkATdLfKufE>

Homily and Community Sharing

Statement of Faith (Taken from “The Friends in Faith” and shared by Joan Meehan

(Joan M and All): Gathered together as people of faith, we profess our belief in a God who is larger than we can name, unable to be contained, yet present in each one of us. We have come to know this God in the living of our lives, and in the holiness of the earth we share. We believe in a God revealed in all peoples—all genders, religions, and orientations. We embrace a compassionate God, who champions justice and mercy, and is always faithful when we call. Our God gives and forgives, patiently loving without conditions. We gratefully believe in a God who feels our deepest struggles, and celebrates our greatest joys. A God who both dances with us in celebration, and holds us when we cry. This God is not “other” to us, but shares our breath in every moment, and promises we are never alone. We believe in a God who believes in us- believes that we are precious and incredible gifts, worthy to claim image and likeness to the divine. We hold fast to our God who journeys with us, who continually calls us to choose the shape of our days through the choices we make. This God accepts us as we are, and shares each hope we have for our becoming. This is the God in whom we believe, our Creator, our Mother and Father who became human in Jesus, our brother. Our God is the Spirit of Life, the voice that continues to speak love, and asks us to answer. In this God we choose to believe. AMEN

Prayers of The Community

(Jerry B): As we prepare for the sacred meal, we bring to this celebration our blessings, cares and concerns:

Our response is: **El Shaddai, blessings on us, shower.**

~Jesus, through prayer and fasting, You teach us to rid our lives of all that blinds us to your Holy Spirit. By your faithfulness to the word of God, help us to keep your gospel alive and meaningful in our culture.

El Shaddai,

blessings on us, shower.

~You revealed yourself to the woman at the well and she became your disciple announcing your truth to others. Let the voices of women be heard in your church, that your message to them may be given to the world.

El Shaddai, blessings on

us, shower.

~We pray for the devastated families suffering from all the natural disasters in our world.

El Shaddai, blessings on us, shower.

~We pray for the people of Ukraine, Russia and all war torn countries that they may live in peace without fear and that justice will prevail for all.

El Shaddai. Blessings on us, shower.

~We pray that world leaders will put the flourishing of all people before power and greed.

El Shaddai, blessings on us, shower.

~Who or What else shall we lift up in prayer?

El Shaddai, blessings on us, shower.

~We pray for all MMOJ intentions on our community prayer list. (Joan shares)

El Shaddai, blessings on us, shower.

(Jim B): We pray for these and all unspoken concerns we hold in the silence of our hearts.

Amen.

Offertory Song

This River of Life by Annie Garretson <https://youtu.be/3sgGJQ-jfWM>

(lift up the bread and wine)

(Joan): Blessed are you, God of all life, through your goodness we have bread, wine, all creation, and our own lives to offer. Through this sacred meal may we become your new creation as we respond to your call to use our gifts in loving service to our sisters and brothers.

All: Blessed be God forever.

Liturgy Of The Eucharist

(Joan): God is within you, blessing the world through you.

All: And also within you.

(Joan): Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up in the Holy One.

(Joan): O Holy One, 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 ruled by your covenant with Israel. In solidarity with the unnamed woman who anointed Jesus, the first to recognize the cost of his fidelity to you, and with all believers who have gone before us, we lift up our hearts and sing:

Holy Holy Holy <https://youtu.be/J3r-3TFB6wl> (by Karen Drucker)

Epiclesis (Invocation of the Holy Spirit ; Lay hands over the bread and wine)

(Elena and All) **We are indeed a holy people. We recognize the Spirit of Light, ever present, ever in our midst, ever part of our very selves. We call forth blessings on this bread and wine as we remember who Jesus was and all that he did to challenge the powers of oppression in his time. On the night before he died, Jesus gathered for the Seder supper with the people closest to him. Like the least of household servants, he washed their feet, so that they would re-member him.**

(Joan and All)

When he returned to his place at the table, he lifted the Passover bread, spoke the blessing, broke the bread and offered it to them saying:

“Take and eat of the Bread of Life given to strengthen you. Whenever you remember me like this I am among you.” (pause)

Jesus then raised a cup of blessing and 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)

(Jeanne S):

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

this mystery of our faith:

In every person and creature that has ever breathed,
 In every living being that has passed on before us,
 In the sharing of the Bread we are transformed,
us.

All: Christ has lived.
All: Christ has died.
All: Christ is still with

(Jim B): Holy One, we celebrate the life of your son and our brother, Jesus. He lived his life and walked forward to his death knowing that you were leading him. We walk forward in his pathway and follow his teaching. We pray for compassion for all human beings, to feel empathy and love for everyone, especially the poor, oppressed, and mournful. We remember all those who suffer and die each year from war, poverty and unjust disease. We mourn for them, and for all creatures we destroy, and for the earth itself. We pray to be gentle, nonviolent, courageous and humble, like your saints. We pray to grow in awareness of our unity with all of creation and co-create with You, our earth as a sanctuary of peace.

(Suzanne B) We pray for a pure heart, inner peace and holiness so that everything that comes from within us might be loving and holy. Opening ourselves up to your Spirit, may we see You everywhere, and may our hearts be receptive to your call just as Jesus answered your invitation to spend time alone with you. We are called to do everything Jesus did, to be the living presence of a love that does justice, of a compassion that heals and liberates, of a joy that generates laughter, of a light that illumines right choices and confronts the darkness of every injustice and inequity. O Holy One, we pray to be filled with your Spirit, the Spirit that filled Jesus. It is through his life and teaching, his loving and healing that all honor and glory is yours forever and ever.

Great Amen: Linda Lee Miller

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dy76fpfkNsg>

(Jeanne S): Let us pray together as Jesus taught us:

Our Father and Mother who are in heaven, whose presence is with us always, and whose spirit dwells within. Hallowed be your name. May your kingdom come, and may your will be done, in our lives, and on earth, just as it is in heaven. Thank you for giving us this day, all that we need for sustenance, nourishment and growth. Forgive us, forgive us when we turn away from your love, when we trespass against you and those you put in our lives. Help us to forgive those who turn away from love and who trespass against us. Keep us from yielding to temptation. Direct us away from anything or anyone that would distract us from your will, your highest good for our lives. Deliver us and protect us from all that is evil. For all glory and power is yours Almighty God just as it was in the beginning, it is now and always shall be, world without end. Amen

(Joan) Please join in praying the Litany for the Breaking of the Bread:

(Joan 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.**

(Joan): 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.

(Elena and All): Holy One, prepare us to be your sanctuary, pure and Holy, tried and true. With thanksgiving, we'll be a living, sanctuary, for you. 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.

(Elena) Please receive/share Eucharist now, saying: **"You are the bread of life."** And **"You are the cup of compassion."**

Meditation Time: A quiet moment to enjoy the Company of El Shaddai in the wilderness of our hearts. Let us close our eyes and invite time to stop.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/KBew9RP1oXc?si=XPui5aO7esTOERUI>

Prayers of Gratitude, Introductions and Announcements

Blessing

(Joan and All): Let us raise our hands and together bless each other.

May vision and truth companion you. May beauty be in your eyes.

May peace fill your being.

May Love hold you close.

May the Earth give you guidance.

May the Stars give you hope.

May the Blessings of life fill you!

(Elena): Commissioning

~Let us go with Hope ready to share our belief that we have the ability to heal our broken earth.

~Let us go in Peace, believing that the divisions and brokenness of our world will be healed by our hands.

~Let us go, with Hearts open to on-going transformation, to being led by the Spirit living within us. And Let us go into this week, held together by love, clothed with the nature of Jesus our Companion and strengthened by Sacred Spirit Divine.

I am the One Within You https://youtu.be/2xpa1U_Pa-E **(Karen Drucker)**

NEW PO BOX:

Please send donations to:

Mary Mother of Jesus Inclusive Catholic Community

5342 Clark Road #3079

Sarasota, FL 34233

Please send intention for our community prayer book to Joan Meehan.

Jmeehan515@aol.com