

**MMOJ Third Sunday of Lent, March 2, 2024, Presiders: Bridget Mary Meehan
ARCWP and Luca Cruzat , Readers: Anna Davis and Mary Al Gagnon,
Prayer Leaders: Pat and Bob Ferkenhoff, IT: Cheryl Brandi**

<https://mmojliturgies.blogspot.com/2024/02/mmoj-third-sunday-of-lent-march-2-2024.html>



Theme: Turn anger at wrong into action for justice

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/93473708926?pwd=VHFKZGJ5N3ljbzZtVU1qQVRZY1lodz09>

Meeting ID: 934 7370 8926

Passcode: 552967

GREETING AND WELCOME:

Luca :

Welcome:

We warmly welcome you to the inclusive Catholic Community of Mary Mother of Jesus on Zoom. We invite you to pray the liturgy where it says “All.” Whoever you are, wherever you are, you are welcome to celebrate Eucharist at our open loving table.

Opening Song: Who Will Speak if We Don't

<https://youtu.be/kZ70EZqICys?si=JiDOJnudx87NHuzl>

Transformation Rite:

Bridget M: Called to be aware that the power of anger can energize us to do good, we pray:

All: May our anger lead us to help right wrongs.

Bridget M: Called to see negative behaviors and unloving actions in ourselves that harm others, we pray:

All: May we make choices that lead to freedom and healing.

Bridget M: Called to respond to the cries of the exploited in our areas, we pray:

All: May we give of our time and resources to create a more equitable world.

(pause)

Luca: Opening Prayer:

Holy One, like Jesus we are called to turn anger at wrong into action for justice. We see our own negative behaviors and recognize our complicity in creating a world invested in greed, exploitation and competition. May our anger be a holy energy that propels us to confront hurtful behaviors, unfair policies and unjust laws that impoverish communities, nations and our earth. May everything we say and do reflect that loving God means loving each other. ALL: So be it.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Anna D: First Reading: Exodus 20:8-17

Then the Holy One spoke all these words saying, "I brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

No gods except me!

Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.

"Honor your mother and your father so that you may have a long life in the land that I have given to you."

"No killing!"

"No committing adultery!"

"No stealing!"

"No bearing false witness against your neighbor's house! No coveting your neighbor's spouse, or worker- or anything that belongs to your neighbor!"

These are the sacred words of the author of Exodus and we respond to them by saying So be it.

Responsorial Psalm: **Loving God Loving Each Other** by Gaither Vocal Band

<https://youtu.be/8UWU0C09ILY>

Mary AI: Second Reading is from Unbelievable by John Shelby Spong

If God is love, as we constantly assert, then how does one live out this love? If God's call to us is to live abundantly, then how do we know what abundant life is? If God is the Ground of Being, then what does it mean to enhance the being of others?

What actions expand life? What actions increase love? What actions enhance being. That is the arena in which good must ultimately be separated from evil. Our ethical answers will never be found within a code of yesterday. They will always be found in the struggle to live fully, to love beyond the boundaries of our security in the affirmation found at the depth of our beings.

Do we then dismiss the great codes of the past? No, but we also do not endow them with the status of ultimate and unchanging laws. We do, however, ascribe to them the wisdom of the ages and we give to our ancestors, who codified those laws, the courtesy of our attention.

These are the sacred words of biblical scholar John Shelby Spong in his book Unbelievable, and we respond to them by saying So be it.

Gospel Acclamation: Spirit of the Living God by Michael Crawford

<https://youtu.be/xoJN0owUoWA>

Luca C: Gospel: John 2:13-17

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. Jesus also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making God's house a marketplace!" His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

These are the sacred words of the author of John, and we respond to them by saying So be it.

Bridget Mary: Homily Starter:

Did you ever hear this joke about the ten commandments?

Moses upon returning from Mt. Sinai, said to the people of Israel:

"I have good news and bad news." "Give us the good news first," the people yelled. "Well," said Moses, "I negotiated them down to ten" "What is the bad news?" the people shouted in response. "To which Moses responded, "Adultery is still in!"

Scholars, like John Shelby Spong, believe that the ten commandments were not meant to be an eternal code because they emerged from the life of the people over different times and circumstances. In the oldest and third version in Exodus 34, (Exodus 20,

Deut. 5) for example, God had to rewrite the commandments because Moses had smashed the original tablets of stone to the ground in anger when he returned from Sinai and discovered the people worshipping a golden calf.

Spong, Unbelievable, p.212, 221)

Bishop Spong offers food for thought on the debate of modern ethics that raises questions- like where is the line between expanding life and just postponing death? “If the commandments have changed in the past, he asks, “does this mean they can change in the future? Does this then mean that questions about when life begins and ends need to be interpreted in a new way? Are there no rules, no ultimate standards?”

Spong concludes that “the ultimate law of the universe is still the law of love through which the fullness of life becomes possible and the ultimate question is how will love be practiced in the circumstances of our very modern world?” (Unbelievable, p.233)

We are created in the image of outpouring love that embraces every aspect of our lives, every cell of our bodies, every love of our lives. This means as Pope Francis declared in his Ash Wednesday sermon, that we must let love touch the deepest, most hidden corners of our hearts and reveal to us our own beauty, and acknowledge that we are: “dust loved by God, called to be dust in love with God.” This is our inner sanctum where we find wisdom and courage to guide us in life's journey.

In John's Gospel, an angry Jesus overturns the money changers tables, and disrupts a lucrative, noisy marketplace in the Temple where merchants charged outrageous fees for converting Roman coins with Caesar's image on them to the imageless Jewish money needed to engage in animal sacrifice. “The temple precincts had become a veritable mall of ATMs, a circus of noise and transactions,” Fr. Bill Bausch notes, “Holiness had been replaced by hokum.”

This despicable treatment of pilgrims in a holy place outraged Jesus and echoed the prophet Isaiah's description of God's displeasure with temple sacrifice: ‘I have had enough of whole-burnt rams. In the blood of calves, lambs, and goats I find no pleasure.’” (Isaiah 1:11)

Barbara Reid connects this passage with sacrificial attitudes that many of us are familiar with from our childhood days: “if we offer up this sacrifice to God, then God will forgive our sins or bestow blessings”.

In Lent, I remember the practice of “giving up” something in union with Jesus' death on the cross. Even though I did not understand the connection, I gave up candy for Lent, and couldn't wait until Easter to taste a big bite of a large chocolate egg.

Contemporary theologians are moving away from this medieval understanding of atonement theology that depicts God as an angry father who demanded his son's death on the cross to make up for our sins. Rather, they believe, that Jesus was put to death because his vision of the kingdom of love and compassion rooted in the Beatitudes

threatened the religious and civic authorities invested in the kingdom of Caesar. Living Jesus teachings of - love in action- will always disturb oppressive systems of injustice and inequity like poverty, racism and sexism.

The institutional Church's excommunication of Catholic women priests who are following Jesus example of an open Eucharistic table in a Church for everyone is a flagrant example of sexism and injustice today. In our emerging ecclesial communities- like MMOJ- our anger at this wrong is being transformed into action for justice in a discipleship of equals.

"When Jesus spoke the words, "This is my Body, " Richard Rohr writes, "he was speaking not just about the bread right in front of him, but about the whole universe about everything that is physical, material and yet also spirit-filled. St. Augustine said, we must feed the body of Christ to the people of God until they know that they are what they eat! And they are what they drink. Many mystics and liberation theologians recognized that inviting us to drink wine as his blood is an invitation to live in bodily solidarity "with the blood of every person whose blood has been unjustly shed on this earth... at this Holy Meal, you are consciously uniting yourself with all unjust suffering in the world. This is all my blood! Jesus is saying."
(Universal Christ, pp.131-134)

Therefore, the words we pray together in the Consecration of the bread and wine: "This is my body"
and "This is my blood" means that Women's bodies - all our bodies are holy and all can represent Christ because we are one body in the Cosmic Christ.

Our Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving help us to turn away from negative behaviors or harmful actions that hurt ourselves and others and turn towards a path that leads to deep awakening that we- along with all creation- are the Body and Blood of Christ on earth! Therefore, as Rohr reminds us that, "in some mysterious way," we are "God having a human experience" and everything is holy now.
(Universal Christ, p. 137)

May our journey during Lent be a time of experiencing that Indwelling Spirit moving within us and loving through us in prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

May our practice of holy anger turn action at wrong- wherever and however we encounter it- into action for love and justice!

Community Sharing: What did you hear in the readings, songs, or homily today that inspires or challenges you?

Bob F and All: Statement of Faith:

We believe that God is love and that Divine Presence is beyond anything we can imagine.

We believe in Jesus, prophet and teacher, who journeyed on the earth, proclaiming good news, healing the sick, liberating those bound by fear, and inviting everyone to an open table.

We believe in Sacred Spirit, Wisdom Sophia, breathing in us and loving through us.

We believe in the communion of saints, our heavenly friends who, help us on our journey.

We believe in the partnership and equality of women and men in our Church and our world. Here we live our prophetic call of Gospel equality.

Pat F: Prayers of the Community:

We now bring our prayer intentions to the Table.

Our response is: All: May our love bring healing in our world.

We pray for the devastated families of those still suffering from hurricanes and all the natural disasters in our world. R

We pray for the people of Ukraine and Russia and Israel and Palestine that they may live in peace without fear and that justice will prevail for all. R

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

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

Our response is: All: May our love bring healing in our world.

For what else should we pray?

Our response is: All: May our love bring healing in our world.

Pat F: Holy Mystery may we respond to the needs of our sisters and brothers in loving prayer and service. Amen

PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS

Bridget Mary: Blessed are You, Holy One, through Your divine providence we have this bread, to share, the Bread of Life.

Bridget Mary and All: Blessed are You, Holy One, forever.

Luca: Blessed are You, O Loving One through Your divine providence we have this wine to share, our spiritual drink.

Beth P and All: Blessed are, You, Holy One, forever.

Bridget Mary: Nurturing One, we are united in this sacrament by the love of Jesus, whose presence draws into the energy of holy anger for action for justice.

Bridget Mary and All: Amen, may it be

PREFACE:

Bob F: God loves through us

Pat and All: And energizes our work for justice.

Bob F: Lift up your hearts.

Pat and All: We lift up our hearts and embrace all.

Bob F: We are blessed when our passions guide us to take action to alleviate wrong and correct wrongs in our suffering world.

Pat and All: Amen

Bob F: In the pondering of our deepest desires right wrongs, and serve our sisters and brothers in need, with the angels and saints, we sing:

Holy, Holy, Holy: by Karen Drucker

<https://youtu.be/orKBB1j5LZA>

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER:

Luca: Like Jesus, may the longings of our hearts deepen our desire to walk the prophetic path to which God calls us, and choose love in every step.

Luca: May we discover the path to wisdom in times of chaos and struggle. May we experience anger as holy energy to propel us to act to right wrongs and speak truth to power on behalf of all who are exploited in our world today. May we savor the loving

presence of the One we long for at every meal. May we nourish one another at this welcome table.

(Please extend your hands in blessing.)

Bridget Mary and All: As we bless this bread and wine, we celebrate the outpouring Spirit within us, around us and among us.

(Community holds bread and prays together)

Bridget Mary and All: On the night before he died, while at supper with his friends, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke the bread and gave it to them saying, "Take this, all of you, and eat. This is my body. Do this in memory of me."

Pause

(Community holds cup up and prays together)

Luca and ALL: In the same way, Jesus took the cup of wine. He said the blessing, gave the cup to his friends and said, "Take this all of you and drink. This is my blood. Do this in memory of me."

Luca and All: Let us proclaim the sacred presence dwelling among us:
Our souls' desire is -like Jesus- to speak truth to power;
Our souls' desire is-like Jesus- to uproot unjust practices;
Our souls' desire is-like Jesus- to love with passionate hearts.

Pat F: We walk in communion with Mary, mother of Jesus and all the saints in heaven and on earth who triumphed over evil, loved tenderly, did justice and served generously. We remember our loved ones in the Communion of Saints.
(pause for silent prayer)

(Community members hold their plates and cups during Doxology)

Bob F and All: Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in union with the Holy Spirit, may holy anger move us to action in responding to exploitation and injustice in serving God's people and all creation.

The Great Amen. Linda Lee Miller

<https://youtu.be/Dy76fpkNsg>

**Luca : THE PRAYER OF JESUS
and All:**

We pray together the prayer of Jesus:

O Holy One, who is within, around, and among us,
we celebrate your many names.

Your wisdom comes.

Your will be done, unfolding from the depths within us.

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.

For you are the dwelling place within us, the empowerment around us, and the
celebration among us, now and forever. Amen.

(The Prayer of Jesus as interpreted by Miriam Therese Winter)

THE SIGN OF PEACE

Bridget M. Let us share a gesture of deep peace with everyone in the circle of life as
we bow and pray:

All: Namaste! Namaste! Namaste!

LITANY FOR THE BREAKING OF BREAD

Luca and ALL:

Loving God, You call us to speak truth to power. We will do so.

Loving God, You call us to live the Gospel of peace and justice. We will do so.

Loving God, You call us to holy anger and prophetic action. We will do so.

Bridget Mary: This is the Bread of Life and Cup of Blessing. How happy are we who
are called to this Table.

And ALL: Jesus, you affirm holy anger as prophetic response to injustice.

Bridget Mary: Let us share the Bread of Life and Cup of Blessing saying:

You are the Body and Blood of Christ

COMMUNION Song:

The Rebel Jesus by Jackson Browne

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tr1d0ivyTTk>

Luca: Prayer after Communion:

May the Holy One, who created us from words and dust and called us good, dwell in
each desire and fill us with holy anger to take action on behalf of justice. May this Lent
be a time of spiritual renewal and growth in our personal lives and in our communities.

All: Amen, May it be so!

Bridget M.: Introductions/Thanksgivings/Announcements

Community Blessing:

Luca: Let us raise our hands and bless each other.

May your longings lead you far
And farther still
toward the place where what you desire
can be met only by the Holy One within you.
On this day of all days,
May you go in the company
of the One who calls you to love everyone with a passionate heart and to turn anger at
wrong into action for justice. Amen.

Our Closing Song is: I am Willing by Holly Near, Video: Donna Panaro

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6YqHxm7I5Ew>

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 :

<https://marymotherofjesus.net>

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