**MMOJ Third Sunday of Extraordinary Time, Jan. 25, 2025, Presiders: Bridget Mary Meehan and Luca Cruzat, Reader: Beth Ponce and Prayer Leader: David Ponce, IT: Cheryl Brandi and Mike Rigdon**

**Theme: Called out of our comfort zones to be prophets of justice**

**Sister Joan Chittister- Contemporary Prophet for Justice, Equality and Human Rights**
**See recent video of Joan Chittister and Liz Cheney:**
https://youtu.be/ybbDuHkJmaE

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**: America by Peter Mayer
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H75FyL1Y0-8

**Transformation Rite:**

**Bridget M**: Called to be aware that the power of love can energize us to do good, we pray:
**All**: May our love 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-like Jesus- to the cries of the oppressed and exploited, 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 anointed by the Spirit to raise our voices as prophets of justice to challenge unfair policies and unjust laws that impoverish communities, and demonize marginalized people. May we listen to Spirit's call wherever it leads us including out of our comfort zones.
ALL: So be it.

**LITURGY OF THE WORD**

**Beth:**
First Reading: The Spirit as Urban Pigeon by Carmen Nanko-Fernandez

For too long we have domesticated the Holy Spirit, imagining a peaceful white dove as a comforter to support the status quo, or as an advocate without the sharp edge of advocacy. We prefer a Spirit less persistent, less irritating, less demanding than the one that gets Jesus run out of his own hometown. We do not appreciate a dis-comforter who shakes us out of our comfort zones who finds in our diversity new ways to make common cause. We avoid a Spirit who vexes and cajoles us to be prophetic advocates working collaboratively with those of us and among us who are pushed to the margins in Church and society. The incarnation of the Spirit is not best represented by a white dove; it is more like the ubiquitous urban pigeon, disruptive, discomforting, irritating.

These are the sacred words of Carmen Carmen Nanko-Fernandez and we respond to them by saying:
**All: May it be be so.**

Responsorial Psalm Who Will Speak if We Don't by Marty Haugen
https://youtu.be/kZ70EZqlCys?si=JiDOJnudx87NHuzI

**David**: Second Reading: A Sermon by Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, at the Service of Prayer for the Nation at the National Cathedral on Jan.21st.

Bishop Marianne Budd pleaded with President Trump to "have mercy" on LGBT individuals and illegal immigrants.

She asked him "to have mercy" on people "in our communities whose children fear that their parents will be taken away and that you help those who are fleeing war zones and persecution in their own lands to find compassion and welcome here.

Our God teaches us that we are to be merciful to the stranger, for we were all once strangers in this land," she continued. "May God grant us the strength and courage to honor the dignity of every human being, to speak the truth to one another in love, and walk humbly with each other and our God."

These are the sacred words of Bishop Marianne Budd and we respond to them by saying
**All: May it be so.**

**Gospel Acclamation: Spirit of the Living God by Michael Crawford**

**https://youtu.be/xoJN0owUoWA**

**Beth**: Gospel: Luke 4: 14-21

Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according t

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him.

Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

"The Spirit of God is upon me
because the Most High has anointed me
to bring good news to those who are poor.

God has sent me to proclaim liberty to those held captive, and
recovery of sight to those who are blind,
and release to those in prison,
To proclaim the year of our God's favor."

Rolling up the scroll, Jesus gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of all the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he said to them, Today, in your hearing, this scripture is fulfilled."

All who were present spoke favorably of him. They marveled at the elegance of the words on Jesus' lips. They said, "Surely, this isn't Mary and Joseph's son?"

Jesus said to them, "Undoubtedly, you'll quote me the proverb, 'Physical, heal yourself', and say "Do here in your own country the things we heard you did in Capernaum.' But the truth is, prophets never gain acceptance in their hometown."

At these words, the whole audience in the synagogue was filled with indignation. They rose up and dragged Jesus out of town, leading him to the brow of the hill with the intention of hurling him over the edge. But he moved through the crowd, and walked away.

These are the sacred words of the author known as Luke, and we respond to them by saying

**All: May it be so.**

**Bridget Mary**: Homily Starter:

The Spirit calls us out of our comfort zone to be prophets of justice.

This week I was deeply moved by the courage of Bishop Marianne Budd - the Episcopalian bishop who spoke truth to power to President Trump in a sermon at a prayer service at the National Cathedral. She expressed her concern over "the culture of contempt" and said she feared "the loss of equality" for some who lose in political debates.

When I first felt the call as a teenager to dedicate my life to God as a nun, it felt like a big step out of my comfort zone - leaving my close knit family in N. Virginia and entering the convent with 90 other postulants in the IHM motherhouse in Immaculata, Pennsylania.

Twenty-five years later, I ventured out of my comfort zone when I returned to the IHM community I had left over 40 years ago for a Band Reunion. My sisters- both the ones still in the Order and those who had left- had many questions. Some sisters were shocked that I was actually excommunicated by the institutional Roman Catholic Church.

I felt their prayerful support and was grateful that I did not need to worry about being thrown out of the retreat center where we spent the weekend!

Even though the Vatican refuses to accept women priests, I am called to keep on leaving my comfort zone and ordain women to foster prophetic justice and baptismal equality everywhere I go including on the Tiber in Rome in the shadow of the Vatican.

In the gospel story, when Jesus returned to his hometown in Nazareth with a transformative message of his call to bring the good news of God's liberating, all-embracing, healing love for all, his home town reacted by trying to throw him over a cliff!

The words attributed to Jesus ring true in every age: "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country."

As Carmen Nanko Fernandez reminds us – perhaps, our image of the Holy Spirit needs a makeover -from a peaceful white dove, to a disturbing, urban pigeon that unsettles us.

She writes: "*We prefer a Spirit less persistent, less irritating, less demanding than the one that gets Jesus run out of his own home town. We do not appreciate a dis-comforter who shakes us out of our comfort zones, who finds in our diversity ways to make common cause. We avoid a Spirit who vexes and cajoles us to be prophetic advocates collaboratively with those of us and among us who are pushed to the margins in Church and society …"*

Like Jesus, we too sometimes find ourselves pushed to the margins, and taken out of our comfort zones in the holy work of the disruptive, discomforting and irritating Holy Spirit!

Like Jesus, we may sometimes face disapproval and push-back from family, friends and neighbors.

In our times now. Martin Luther King's famous quote "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere" means that any act of injustice, no matter where it occurs, undermines the pursuit of justice for everyone everywhere.

In our time, in our world, in our country, I believe this is where we are. The Spirit of God is calling us out of our comfort zones like our beloved Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, Sister Joan Chittister, Liz Cheney and Bishop Marianne Budd.

In these times of great distress, we cannot be silent. There is always something we can do to make life better for someone and to engage in prophetic advocacy for those in need.

As a community, MMOJ has been partnering with groups in Sarasota to serve the impoverished, unhoused and hungry in our local area.

As we discern our call in the weeks and months ahead, let's ask ourselves - in the gigantic challenges we see before us- what is the Spirit of Discomfort calling us to do to bring prophetic justice and equality to our world?

Community sharing:

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

**David 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 call to bring prophetic justice to our world.

Beth: **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 fires, hurricanes and all the natural disasters in our world. R

We pray for peace and justice for all nations throughout the world R

We pray that our political and religious leaders, including President Trump, that they 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.

**Beth:** 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:**

**Beth:** God loves through us
**David and All:** And energizes our work for justice.

**Beth:** Lift up your hearts.
**David and All**: We lift up our hearts and embrace all.

**Beth :** We are blessed when our passions guide us to take action to alleviate wrong and correct wrongs in our suffering world.
**David and all:** Amen

**Beth:** 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, Video by Mary Theresa Streck**

https://youtu.be/orKBBIj5LZA

**EUCHARISTIC PRAYER:**

**Luca:** Like Jesus, may we follow the Spirit when we are called out of our comfort zones. 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 be a hand to hold and a safe place for our sisters and brothers to gather at the table of love.

*(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 blessing our bodies and nourishing our souls..

*(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. Do this in memory of me.”

**Luca and All:** Let us proclaim the sacred presence dwelling among us:

The Spirit call us -like Jesus- to speak truth to power;
The Spirit calls us-like Jesus- to uproot unjust practices;
The Spirit call us is-like Jesus- to love with passionate hearts.

**Bridget Mary:** 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)*

**Luca :** Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in union with the Holy Spirit, may we respond to exploitation and injustice by serving God's people and all creation.

The Great Amen. Linda Lee Miller

https://youtu.be/Dy76fpfkNsg

**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.Let us share the Bread of Life and Cup of Blessing saying:
You are the Body of Christ

**COMMUNION Song:** Where did Jesus Go? By Sara Thomsen, Video by Denise Hackert -Stoner
s://youtu.be/biPM_MTQVgI?si=weMLdEuVOvBM6U40

**Luca: Prayer after Communion:**
May the Spirit guide us out of our comfort zones to take action on behalf of justice. May we follow Jesus' example as we grow in love and compassion for our sisters and brothers in need. May we be the face of God to the suffering in our communities and world.
**All:** Amen, May it be so!

**Dismissal:**
With wisdom and courage, let us go forth to work together to do good for those in need. In so doing, we live our prophetic call to walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

**Community Blessing:**

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

May we be prophets of justice in the face of rejection and turmoil.
May we serve our sisters and brothers generously.
May we be a blessing to the world.

**Our Closing Song is: We the People by Nimo Patel ( stop at 2:38)**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6P_okJIW1dI

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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