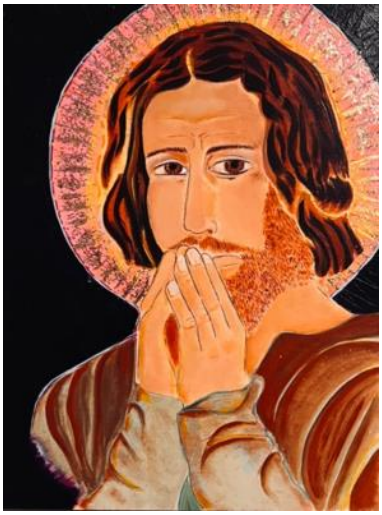
MMOJ Liturgy for the Baptism of Jesus: January 11, 2025, Presiders: Mary Theresa Streck and Mary Ann Matthys, Reader and Prayer Leader: Jane Shugrue and Andrea Seabaugh, IT: Cheryl Brandi



"Beloved" Painting by Mary Ann Matthys

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Meeting ID: 934 7370 8926
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Theme: Belovedness

GREETING and WELCOME!

Mary Theresa: Welcome to Mary Mother of Jesus Inclusive Catholic Community where everyone is welcome to share in our celebration of the Eucharist. Please have bread and wine/juice nearby as we pray our Eucharistic prayer.

Today is we celebrate the Baptism of Jesus, the beloved child of the Holy One as well as our belovedness. Our opening song is Psalm 139, an ancient song of gratitude. The communion song reminds us that we are beloved sons and daughters of the Holy One. The song is so relevant to our theme today. The reference to the Holy One is male, but we know that the Holy One is beyond gender. Our closing song, Lead With Love, invites us to step forward blessed and a blessing to the world.

Opening Song: Psalm 139 by Kathryn Christian
https://youtu.be/Is2jfPmHDCU

Transformation Rite:

Mary Theresa: Let us recall times when we failed to see our belovedness and the belovedness of all our brother and sisters.

Pause for several moments of silent reflection as you place hand over your heart.

Mary Theresa. and ALL: We are sorry, please forgive us, We love you.

Gloria:

Opening Prayer (**Mary Ann):** Holy One, at the baptism of Jesus You revealed Him to be Your Son, anointing Him with your Spirit. May we live into our calling as Your beloved children, empowered by the life of Jesus, listening to you, guided by Your Spirit, to fulfill our unique purpose in this world, in this place, at this time in history. Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD:

First Reading: (Jane) A reading from the Prophet Isaiah
(Isaiah 42; 1-4, 6-7

Thus says the Holy One:
Here is my servant whom I uphold,
my chosen one with whom I am pleased,
upon whom I have put my spirit;
he shall bring forth justice to the nations,
not crying out, not shouting,
not making his voice heard in the street.
A bruised reed he shall not break,
and a smoldering wick he shall not quench,
until he establishes justice on the earth;
the coastlands will wait for his teaching.

I have called you for the victory of justice,
I have grasped you by the hand;
I formed you, and set you
as a covenant of the people,
a light for the nations,
to open the eyes of the blind,
to bring out prisoners from confinement,
and from the dungeon, those who live in darkness.

The community affirms these words by saying AMEN!

Second Reading: (Andrea) A reading from *Mostly What God Does* by Savannah Guthrie

"Watch what God does, and then you do it, like children who learn from a parent. Mostly what God does is love you. Keep company with HER and learn a life of love. Observe how Jesus loved. His love was not cautious but extravagant. He didn't love in order to get something from us but to give everything of himself to us. Love like that." Ephesians 5

…These words from The Message were a thunderbolt…The simplicity of the words and the unadorned plainness of their truth were a revelation…

Mostly what God does is love you. These simple words amounted to a radical reframing of my concept of God. They grabbed and held my heart…Mostly what God does is love you. To believe this about God is the essence of faith: giving God the benefit of the doubt in a world that invites cynicism and despair…Imagine it- God loving you. Seeing you, appreciating you, delighting in you. Knowing you, having compassion on you, healing you, forgiving you. See it appreciate it, grasp it, hold on to it.

Look for it everywhere. What you will find is that love like that is not just for you. It is for the world. For love like that cannot be contained- it is exuded and exhaled outward.

Love like that.
This is our great commission: choose to believe in God's love. Wrap yourself in it; let it warm you from the inside. Then go out into the world, and you do it too.

The community affirms these words by saying AMEN!

Alleluia: Celtic Alleluia by Christopher Walker
https://youtu.be/4cs8NDVM3Vk

Gospel: (Mary Theresa) A reading from the Gospel of Luke
Lk 3:15-16, 21-22

The people were filled with expectation,
and all were asking in their hearts
whether John might be the Christ.
John answered them all, saying,
"I am baptizing you with water,
but one mightier than I is coming.
I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals.
He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

After all the people had been baptized
and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying,
heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him
in bodily form like a dove.

And a voice came from heaven,
"You are my beloved;
with you I am well pleased."

The community affirms these words by saying AMEN!

<u>Shared Homily</u> (Mary Ann)
Imagine Jesus in the moment he emerges from the baptismal waters of the Jordan seeing the heavens open, rays of light streaming through the clouds, the Holy Spirit descending in bodily form like a dove and the voice of the Holy One speaking, "You are my beloved Son, in you I am well pleased." The Trinity is tangible in this moment. This is a moment of all encompassing love between creator and child, and between all aspects of the Divine, visible for all to see and witness. So what is the invitation here? Are we simply to be bystanders of this incredible moment? Are we witnesses to Jesus's divinity and nothing more, or is there a deeper possibility? I imagine the people in the crowd who witnessed this moment were changed forever by what they witnessed that day. I can imagine the excitement in the surrounding communities as they told everyone what they saw.

So what about us?

The Divine love story between God and humanity manifests into human history in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. He is the focal point of that love in this Gospel reading. We are the culmination of that love in and throughout time, as Christ's presence within us activates Divine Presence in our world today. And, just as Jesus is a beloved child of God, so are we. Just as he lived into his calling, so can we.

What if we own our belovedness? What if we live from that place? How would that change us and in turn how would that change the world? Owning our belovedness beckons us to an extravagant love that wants to be shared. Living from the certainty that we are deeply, completely, unconditionally loved just as we are changes everything. A confidence develops over time as we live into our belovedness day by day. Belovedness is a firm footing that enlivens our relationships, our work and our ministry. You see, love begets love. The divine spark of love within us grows and grows until it overflows in extravagant love for others, for Earth, for all life, for everything. When we lead with love in all we say and do, and share the goodness we have received, we change the world one heart at a time…

As you go through your days, remember, You are a beloved child of God. Wrap yourself in Divine love. Let it warm your heart and then go out into your community and embody that love in all you say and do.

Please share your thoughts on the readings and theme for today.

Statement of Faith

Jane: Let us pray together our statement of faith

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.

Prayers of the Community:

Andrea: As we prepare for this sacred meal we are aware that just as Jesus is loved, so is each of us. As dearly loved children of God, 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…..”

Joan Meehan shares Prayer Intentions in MMOJ book
and for what else do we pray?

Andrea: We pray for these and all unspoken intentions. Amen.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Preparation of The Gifts

(*All hold bread plate)*

Mary Ann: Blessed are you, God of all Life. Through your goodness we have received the bread we offer you fruit of the earth, and work of human hands. It will become for us the bread of life.
Mary Ann and All: Blessed by God forever.

(All hold cup)
Mary Theresa: Blessed are you, God of all creation, for through your goodness we have received the wine we offer you: fruit of the vine and work of human hands, it will become our spiritual drink
Mary Theresa and All: Blessed by God forever.

PREFACE

Jane: God dwells in us.
Andrea and ALL: And in all people everywhere.

Jane: Lift up your hearts.
Andrea and ALL: We lift them up in the joy of Divine Presence within us.

Jane: Affirm the power of love within you and within all.
Andrea and ALL: Alleluia

EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

Jane: Let us pray our Eucharistic prayer with open hearts and hands:

Blessed are you, Holy One, source of all creation. Through your goodness you made this world and called us to be Your co-creators. We give thanks for the diversity and beauty of life around us and within us.

We open our awareness to the goodness of all of creation and we remember our responsibility to serve. You invite us to build the earth into a community of love rooted in justice. You place confidence in us, for you made us and you know that we are good.

In joy and in thanksgiving we join with all the faithful servants who have gone before us, and we sing:

Here In This Place *by Christopher Grundy*
https://youtu.be/uXyu57tR2gk

Andrea: We thank you for Jesus, our brother and friend, active teacher and servant, lifting up the lowly, revealing you as God-With-Us, and revealing us in our belovedness, as one with you and all of creation.

He lived among us to show us who we are and challenged us to know you, deeply, unabashedly, not holding anything back. He taught us the strength of compassionate love.

Mary Theresa: Please extend your hands in blessing.

Mary Theresa and ALL: We are grateful for your Spirit at our Eucharistic Table and for this bread and wine which reminds us of our call to be the body of Christ in the world.

On the night before he died, Jesus gathered for supper with the people closest to him. Like the least of household servants, he washed their feet, so that they would re-member him.

All lift their plates and pray the following:

When he returned to his place at the table, he lifted the bread, spoke the blessing, broke the bread and offered it to them saying:
Take and eat, this is my very self.
(pause)

All lift their cups and pray the following:

Then he took the cup of the covenant, spoke the grace, and offered it to them saying:
Take and drink.
Whenever you remember me like this,
I am among you.
(pause)

Pause for silent reflection

Mary Theresa and ALL: Let us proclaim the sacred presence of our nurturing God: You are born again and again in us and through us each day.

Jane: We remember the prophet and saints in every age: Miriam and Moses, Mary, Mother of Jesus, and Joseph, and all our beloved family and friends. We recall the spiritual treasures they passed down to us through the ages.

Andrea: We join in the divine cosmic dance in communion with all that is, all that was, and all that will be. Through Christ, in Christ, with Christ, all praise and glory echoes through the universe as your Spirit leaps for joy within us!

The Great Amen with Linda Lee Miller

https://youtu.be/Dy76fpfkNsg

THE PRAYER OF JESUS

Mary Ann: Let us pray as Jesus taught us:

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 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. *Adapted by Miriam Therese Winter*

THE SIGN OF PEACE

Mary Theresa: Jesus, you said: Peace I leave you, my peace I give you. May we be the peace we wish to see in the world. Let us share a gesture of deep peace and justice with everyone in the circle of life as we bow toward you with hands folded, saying together:

Mary Theresa: The peace of Christ be with you. Namaste, Namaste, Namaste.

LITANY FOR THE BREAKING OF BREAD

Mary Ann: Let us pray the litany for the breaking of the bread:

Loving God, we are called to speak truth to power. We will do so.
Loving God, we are called to live the Gospel of peace and justice. We will do so.
Loving God, we are called to be Your presence in the world. We will do so.

Mary Ann: What we have heard with our ears, we will live with our lives. As we share communion, we become Communion both love's nourishment and love's challenge.
Please receive Communion with the words "I am deeply loved (by God)."

Communion Song: Belovedness (ft. Nathan Jess) Sarah Kroger
https://youtu.be/5ky_Jq_7NPA?si=AW211wVwLmSl0Dko

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Mary Theresa: Holy One, Your delight in us opens our hearts and awakens us to our calling. We are willing to follow the example of our brother Jesus, to re-create the living presence of a love that does justice, of a compassion that heals and liberates, of a joy that generates hope, of a light that illumines people and confronts the darkness of every injustice and inequity. Be ever present with us reminding us of your love and acceptance.
ALL: Amen.

Mary Theresa: We welcome newcomers and ask you to introduce yourself. Are there any prayers of Gratitude? Are there any Announcements?

CONCLUDING RITE

DISMISSAL
Mary Theresa: The Holy One is within you.
ALL: May we sing and dance for joy as we celebrate every day as a Holy Family!

BLESSING

Mary Theresa: Please extend your hands in mutual blessing.

Mary Theresa: May you hear the voice of Love as Jesus did,
rising from the waters and whispering through the heavens:
"You are my beloved; in you, I am well pleased."

May these words echo in the depths of your soul,
awakening the truth that has been yours since the beginning:
You are enough. You are seen. You belong.

In the Name of the One who walked into the waters
to walk with us all,
may you step forward,
blessed and a blessing to the world.
Amen.

A Blessing at the Waters of Belonging by Lizzie Berne DeGear

Closing Song: Lead With Love by Melanie DeMore and video by Mary Ann Matthys
https://youtu.be/wAeCRk3ahpU?si=E9FRFIMjYZJacjTi

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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