The First Sunday of Advent
"Hope in the Reign of God in Challenging Times"
November 30, 2024
Co-Presiders: Karen Kerrigan ARCWP and Katy Zatsick ARCWP
Readers and Prayer Leaders: Joan Pesce ARCWP, Kathryn Shea ARCWP, Mary Kay Staudohar
IT: Cheryl Bondi

(The Gospel of Luke Icon
from The Book of Kells)

Welcome and Gathering

Karen: Welcome to our Zoom liturgy at Mary Mother of Jesus, an inclusive Catholic Community where all are welcome.
My name is Karen Kerrigan and I am co-presiding this liturgy today with Katy. I am a priest of ARCWP ordained in Detroit in 2018. I am also a Monroe, MI, IHM Associate for more than 20 years. I live in Westland near where Katy lives in Hamtramck. Like Katy, I have been a life-long follower of Jesus of Social Justice. Recently, I have become very interested in my Irish Celtic Heritage. I enjoy working with others to connect with our stories and experiences. I am grateful to Katy for her invitation to lead with her today.

-We invite you to pray the liturgy and respond where it says "All."

-All participants will be muted during the liturgy except for the presiders and readers. After you are finished reading, please mute yourself again.
-Please have your Advent Wreath or a candle of Hope and something to light it with. Please have bread and wine/juice nearby as we pray our Eucharistic prayer.
- Today is The First Sunday of Advent. We are going to begin with The Advent Candle lighting ceremony.

Karen: Today, we are lighting the Hope Candle, the first candle of Advent. I invite you to designate your candle as The Hope Candle.
Let us light our Hope candle now.
Elena will light the Hope candle of our MMOJ advent wreath
(pause for candle lighting)
Karen: In honor of The Hope Candle, let us read this Hope Poem together..

Kathryn & All: Hope
By Kayleen Asbo

Kathryn & All: Emily Dickenson
Imagined Hope
As a thing with feathers and wings.
A small bird
Singing a perpetual song of sweetness
Even amidst life's storms

Kathryn & All: Some people imagine
Hope
Leading a triumphant parade
Trumpets and cymbals,
Bells and whistles.
Technicolored fireworks
Alerting everyone for miles around
I have arrived!

Kathryn & All: Now in this rainy hour,
Hope feels more
Like a mycelium
Under a dark canopy of trees:
Tiny, invisible threads in our depths
Weaving us together,

Kathryn & All: So that together,
We might rise
To become
Food for the world.

May it be so! Amen.

(credit) https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgzQXKDbxhZGVDtmVqTQhCvJHzrJK

Katy: Gathering Song:
Circle Me. Advent Version by Simon De Voil

https://youtu.be/qDDjUkH5Ju0?feature=shared ***(to 59 seconds)***
Hope with me, ***Hope*** before me
Hope behind me, ***Hope*** in me
Hope beneath me, ***Hope*** above me
Hope on my right, ***Hope*** on my left
Hope when I lie down, ***Hope*** when I arise
Hope when I take rest, ***Hope*** to shield me

Liturgy of the Word

Mary Kay: Our First Reading is from The Gospel of Luke
Luke 21: 21-25 from NABRE (New American Bible Revised Edition)

"There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on earth nations will be in dismay, perplexed by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will die of fright in anticipation of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see The Fully Human One coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these signs begin to happen, stand erect and raise your heads because your redemption is at hand."

Joan P: **Responsorial Psalm 4** by Silvia Purdie

Our Response is:
Joan and all: **I Rest in You, O Beloved, I am in your safekeeping, Body and soul. Held in peace.**

Joan: My heart cries out to You, My Beloved.
All that upsets me You see,
All that disturbs me, You understand
Only here in Your presence
Am I fully known
I am wrapped in Grace.

Joan and All: I rest in You, O Beloved, I am safe in Your keeping, Body and soul. Held in peace.

Joan: I try to relax but anger rattles me.
I try to relax but my failings and fears niggle at me.

Be still,
Be silent.
Put your trust in Our Beloved.

Joan and All: I Rest in You, O Beloved, I am in your safekeeping, Body and soul. Held in peace.

Joan: In the stillness, the light of your face shines.
My heart turns to thankfulness and is glad.
I have more than enough
You, Our Beloved are more than enough.
I lie down to sleep,
Safe and sound.

Joan & All: I Rest in You, O Beloved, I am in your safekeeping, Body and soul. Held in peace.

Joan: Be still
And Rest.
You are held.
In peace.

(***www.theworkofthepeople.com***

Katy: Our Second Reading is from Finding Hope in Hard Times by Vanessa Lancaster in Psychology Today

"I am lost. Please show me the way."

These past few weeks in The United States and on planet earth have been tumultuous and anxiety-provoking, and being able to find words to express that made me feel that I wasn't lost in some forever caption-less place. Words matter. Even the littlest ones.

Moving from feeling the lost-ness to actually being able to articulate "I am lost" is the beginning of our well-being. Words are coordinates. Legitimate ones: Lost is a place—a place where we temporarily land. Especially in hard times. A place where we can find ourselves.

At that moment, as I felt more connected with my narrative rather than a jumble of despair and judgments about feeling despair, hope suddenly sprang back within me. There was room for it. I felt compassion—a person I knew well was suffering—it was, in fact, me. Can you relate?

These are the inspired words of Vanessa Lancaster and we affirm them by saying, **All: Amen** .https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/worry-wise/202207/finding-hope-in-hard-times

Karen: Gospel Luke 17:20 & 21

When asked by the Pharisees when the kin-dom of God would come, Jesus said in reply: Please join in singing Jesus' reply….

Kingdom Within by Karen Childs Elder.
https://youtu.be/J1nq2WO7a_Y?feature=shared

The Kin-dom of God does not come with observation.
No, The Kin-dom of God does not come with observation.
Nor, will they say see here or say see there.
For, Indeed The Kin-dom of God is within you!
The Kin-dom of God does not come with observation.
No, The Kin-dom of God does not come with observation.
Nor, will they say see here or say see there.
For, Indeed The Kin-dom of God is within you!
The Kin-dom within you!
Within you, Within you, Within you!

Karen: These are the inspired words by the writer called Luke and we affirm them by saying: **All: Amen**

Homily Starter: Where am I right now? What is my physical, emotional and spiritual location? No matter how much I want to avoid the tumultuous feelings I've been having these past few weeks, they are here whether I like it or not. I am here with them whether I like it or not. I decided to allow my Celtic Spirituality to help me to navigate these times.

In the Book of Kells, the symbol for Luke's Gospel is a majestic icon of a cow with wings. A year ago, when I traveled to Ireland, I noticed that there were cows everywhere. I have learned that cows are essential to people who depend on them for milk, cheese and butter. They provide nourishment when food is scarce and times seem bleak. For much of Irish history, your wealth was determined by how many cows you own.

Luke's Iconic Celtic Cow has wings and if we join her, we can fly over the past few weeks and gain an aerial perspective. In Celtic Spirituality, our path comes in spirals and circles rather than in straight lines. As we ponder the three readings today, I know my experience will not be in a straight line but will spiral and circle back as I take this bird's eye view with my flying dairy cow friend.

To start, I fly over that Apocalyptic reading! I can relate to the ominous words, as I remember staying up late to watch the election returns. To me, I felt like the moon, and the stars, and on earth nations will be in dismay, perplexed by choices that the majority of my fellow Americans made. The same chapter of Luke that contains this Apocalyptic passage begins with the story of the widow placing her last coins in the temple treasury. Similar to Jesus, and sitting with my Celtic Dairy Cow, I imagine observing this woman putting her last coins into the treasury as it seems to parallel how many white women voted for you know who. I feel very perturbed and distressed by what the widow and all these women were coaxed into doing. **What moves in you as you hear the Apocalyptic first reading?**

The morning of November 6th, I found the psalm that we read to be helpful to return to these past few weeks and recite *I Rest in You, O Beloved, I am in your safekeeping.* I try to remind myself that I am in Our Beloved's safekeeping. What focal points and words are helping you these early days of Advent 2024?

I found Vanessa Lancaster's article comes right out and admits where she is by naming, "I am lost!" I too have felt very lost. But I'm supposed to be a woman of faith! How can I be in this place called lost? This reminded me of when I try to hike in the woods, even at this time of the year when the leaves are on the forest floor, I manage to get myself lost. Padraig O Tuama, author of the book, In the Shelter: finding home in the world, suggests that when lost in the woods, pay attention to the trees. "For rooted things, like trees and bushes, can tell the truth to persons who are lost. A person like myself with legs and feelings of fear who wishes to be elsewhere. Stand still and learn from the trees and bushes that are already in the places where I wish I were not!" I find trees and other parts of nature to be helpful anchors when I feel lost. **What anchors in nature are helpful to you?**

Finally, we sang, The Kin-dom of God is within you! I balk as I remember this song that points to The Reign of God being inside me! How can this be when I am still working through deep grief? Aren't times like these more a matter for tears rather than trying to rush into song? Hello to feeling the deep tears of grief yet striving also to find the song that reminds me where I always am. I am here where the Reign of God is within me even with tears of deep grief and dismay. I am here in the Kin-dom's safekeeping where I can work through my pain and confusion. Luke's Celtic Dairy Cow reminds me that I can be nourished here, even when the skies are gray, the leaves are down and the howling wind seems to agree, our current realities are tumultuous yet The Reign of God is still in the midst of it. Even though I will still spiral going around this path, I do so in Our Beloved's safekeeping.
What are the focal points, cultural symbols and words that help you to name what being here is?

Community Sharing: Katy

What did you hear in our readings today
Where are you right now? What is your physical, emotional and spiritual location?
What are the focal points, cultural symbols and words that help you to name what being here in the now is?
Where do you see and experience hope after the election and going forward?
We are living in the Reign of God today, how am I called to act/resist the implementation of Project 2025 and White Christian Nationalism?

Katy: What does salvation mean:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_rx6F6fmicI
Fr David is a retired Episcopalian priest.

Communal Statement of Faith

Mary Kay and All Please join in our Communal Statement of Faith

We believe in the Holy One, a divine mystery
beyond all definition and rational understanding,
the hope 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
even under oppression,
as a embodiment of divine love,
a source of wisdom and truth,
and co-creators of peace and justice in the United States and in the world.

We believe in Sophia Spirit,
the fire 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 within,
stretched out all around us for those
with eyes to see it, hearts to receive it,
and hands to make it happen. May we make this so in our time and place.

Prayers from the Community

Kathryn: As we prepare for this sacred meal, we are called to be The Living Compassion of Healing & Hope. We bring to this table our prayers for the community.
(Reader): Let us pray for our personal, community, country, world's needs;
Our response is: **All: Beloved Creator of unconditional love, center and ground us in Your Divine Reign.**
Beloved Creator, we need you to address and reveal your love, help, strength, courage and wisdom to see clearly and respond with your compassion and hope. **R**
We stand against any violence imposed on immigrants, ethnic, religious minorities, Women and people in The LGBTQIA+ Community. **R**
We stand in support of those speaking truth to power, defenders of our Constitution, the Rule of Law and the Bill of Rights. **R**
We stand in support of Diversity of Faith and Academic Freedom. **R**
We stand in support of Differently Abled Persons, Wise Elders and those with pre-existing conditions. **R**
We stand in support of all life on earth to the 7th generation. **R**
Joan Meehan: MMOJ Book of Intentions
And, for what else should we pray?
Kathryn and All: Beloved Creator of Unconditional Love, may we your beloved daughters and sons respond to the needs of our sisters and brothers in loving words, actions, kindness and solidarity. With your guidance may we resist the attacks on our country from within Amen

Offering of the Bread and Wine

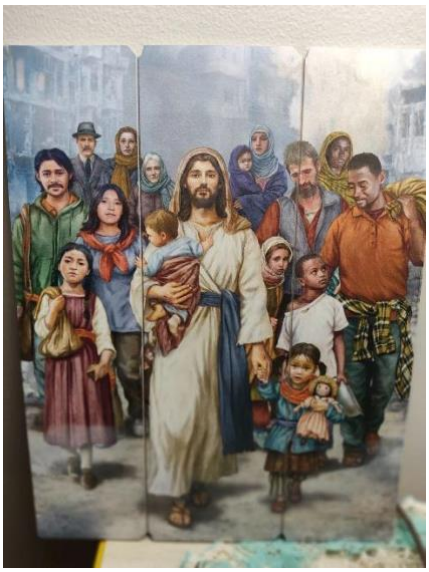
Joan: Blessed are you, Holy Mystery, Creator of all life, this bread is your community of Mary Mother of Jesus coming to our political reality, facing the injustice and violence while grounding ourselves in the Living Reign of God. We have this bread to offer, it will become for us the Bread of all the gifts that we're going to need. **All: Praise to you Jesus, our Universal Christ.**

Katy Blessed are you, Holy Mystery, in whom we live and move and have our being. This wine is our desire to live following your Way for us. Lives of reconciliation, transformation, healing, justice and peace for the USA, humanity and earth. We have this wine to offer, it will become our spiritual drink to sustain us in these moral and political challenges. **All: Praise to you Jesus, our Universal Christ.**

Rite of Transformation

Mary Kay and All. We pause now to ask for the individual and communal transformation we need to participate in co-creating your Reign on Earth. Enliven Hope and Joy in us with Wisdom, Understanding, Love, Knowledge, Steadfastness, Courage and Healing. (Pause briefly and place your hand over your heart)

Mary Kay and all: Manifest within and through us your creative power to work miracles, the ability to prophesy, the ability to tell the spirits apart, to discern our actions and to build your beloved community in solidarity with all those who are suffering.



Eucharistic Prayer

Kathryn:
Holy Stranger on The Road to Emmaus, reveal to us your endless outpouring of grace, renew our hope amidst the wrong and suffering of our country and our world. In you, we live and move and dwell in the Reign of God beyond our deepest comprehension.

Joan :
Like the two walking Emmaus' Road, we are in deep grief. We call upon you, Generous Giver, to give us wise companions on our journey. We need partners in solidarity who will work for humanity's healing and well-being and for the flourishing of all creation. With thankful hearts, in the company of all holy women and men, your liberating Spirit of Hope rises up within us, works through us and we sing:

ALL: Holy, Holy, Holy (adapted from Holy, Holy, Holy by Karen Drucker)
https://youtu.be/orKBBIj5LZA

Mary Kay:
Help me to be conscious of the oneness we share and the inequity that exists in our country and world. We pray that we may serve others with generous hearts especially the least and the last, the oppressed and marginalized. The bread we break and the cup we share are symbols of the fullness of life and hope in the reign of God that all are invited to share.

Please extend your hands in blessing and pray together.

Karen & All:
As we bless this bread and wine, we are ever aware of Your Spirit in us and among us at this Eucharistic table. We remember our brother Jesus whose life and teachings reflected the depth of divine love beyond our hopes and dreams.

Katy & All: lifting up the bread
On the night before he died, Jesus came to table with his family and the women and men he loved. Jesus took bread blessed and broke it, saying, "Take, eat, this is my body. Do this in memory of me."

(pause)

Karen & All: lifting up the cup
After supper, Jesus poured a cup of wine and shared it with his friends, saying, "This is the cup of the covenant of my love. As often as You drink of it, remember me."

Joan & All:
Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:
Christ suffers in all those who experience the life-destroying results of Project 2025.
Christ is rising in all those working and ministering for the well-being of all people in The United States.
Christ comes each day in our ministry, prayers and actions for a renewed United States of America in a world with justice and equality for all.

Mary Kay & All: Embracing Presence, we remember all the companions who have gone before us: Mary, Mother of Jesus, Mary of Magdala, and all holy women and men who are rising up in loving service to heal our world. We pause now to remember our family and loved ones in the communion of saints.

(pause, Presiders and all hold bread and wine)

Kathryn & All:
For it is through living as Jesus lived, and loving as he loved, we implore You to empower us to resist violence & injustice in the United States. We especially ask that we awaken in the hope of Sophia Spirit commissioning us to work for the flourishing of life for all persons, species and for all life on planet Earth.

All: Great Amen (Sung) Linda Lee Miller
https://youtu.be/Dy76fpfkNsg

The Prayer of Jesus

Mary Kay and All:
Gracious Spirit, who loves us like a mother,
Whose realm is blooming hope among us now and within.
We pray that your compassion guides us in every action.
Give us what we need for each day,
and help us to be satisfied with the miracle of that alone.
Forgiver, whose embrace brings us to wholeness without our asking,
may we reconcile ourselves to one another in humility.
And may we cancel the crushing debts that imprison our neighbors,
so that communities of joy and health may flourish.
May we neither profit from nor ignore evil.
But ever work to erase hatred, racism, injustice and income, housing, gender, health-care inequality in the United States with non-violence as we co-create your realm of peace in this world, now and each day.
Amen. (Adapted from Bret Hesla/wsj)

Katy:
Jesus said to his disciples, "My peace I leave You. My peace I give You."
Let us share a sign of Holy Mystery's peace of the reign of God by reciting "Namaste, Namaste, Namaste" as we bow to each other.

Communion

Karen Please join in praying the Litany for the Breaking of the Bread
Karen and All: Holy One, You call us to speak truth to power; we will do so.
Holy One, You call us to live the Hope of The Gospel of healing and justice; we will do so.
Holy One, Living consciously in The Reign of Our Beloved, You call us to be Your presence in the world; we will do so.

Mary Kay: (all lifting up the bread & wine) This is the bread of life and the cup of blessing. Blessed are we who are called to the Feast with the Hope of and living in the Reign of Holy Mystery.
Mary Kay & All: We are the Hope and the Body and Blood of Christ for the world living in resistance to cruelty and corruption.

Katy: Please receive/share the bread and wine. When receiving the bread say "We are living hope for the USA. When receiving the wine say, "We live in the Reign of Holy Mystery."

Communion Meditation Song:

O Come, O Come Emmanuel. Instrumental. Piano Guys.
https://youtu.be/iO7ySn-Swwc?feature=shared

Katy: Introductions, Prayers of thanksgiving, Announcements

Katy: Please extend Your hands as we pray our final blessing.

Katy, Karen & All:
During the next two to four years,
May you continue to do the good work,
May you continue to build bridges not walls.
May you continue to lead with compassion.
May you continue the demanding work of liberation for all.
May you continue to dismantle broken systems large and small.
May you continue to set the best example for the children.
May you continue to be a vessel of nourishing joy and hope.
May you continue right where you are.
May you continue right where you live into your days.
May you do so in the name of our Beloved Creator
who expects nothing less from each of us.
(Adapted Bishop William J. Barber II)

Katy: Closing Song: Hope Beyond All Hope. Alana Levandoski
https://youtu.be/iTSXNZQ-IV0?feature=shared

May you all have a blessed Advent Season,
grounded in the Hope and Love who is Jesus,
in our lives and our MMOJ Community.
Karen and Katy

Liturgy adapted from Mary Magdalene Liturgy written by Bridget Mary Meehan and Mary Theresa Streck. Opening, Closing Prayers, Community Prayers written by Mary Kay

If you would like to add your intention to our MMOJ Community Prayers book,
Please send an email to Joan Meehan Jmeehan515@aol.com

If you would like to invite another person to attend our liturgy, please refer them to
www.Marymotherofjesus.net where the day's liturgy is found.
Zoom instructions are also included there.

To support our community, please send your check to:

Mary Mother of Jesus Inclusive Catholic Community

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