

People Progress

Sunday Community

Feb 4, 2024

5th Sunday in Ordinary Time

E R Whelan

Thank you, Fr. Paul, for celebrating with us.

REFLECTION: by Mary Piper, submitted by John MacMillan

5th Sunday in Ordinary time

We're in the long nights and grey days of winter, and our readings today are of Job and Paul, trying every day to follow God's will, and the early work of Jesus to bring healing and the good news.

My reflection is on managing to find light in our troubled times. It was written by Mary Piper, who in her unassuming way, is a light in our world. This is a long reflection, but worth the read:

"I am in the last decades of life, and sometimes I feel that my country and our species are also nearing end times. The despair I feel about the world would ruin me if I did not know how to find light. Whatever is happening in the world, whatever is happening in our personal lives, we can find light.

This time of year, we must look for it. I am up for sunrise and outside for sunset. I watch the moon rise and traverse the sky. I light candles early in the evening and sit by the fire to read. And I walk outside under the blue-silver sky of the Nebraska winter. If there is snow, it sparkles, sometimes like a blanket of diamonds, other times reflecting the orange and lavender glow of a winter sunset.

We can watch the birds. Recently, it was the two flickers at my suet feeder with the yellow undersides of their wings flashing, the male so redheaded and protective, the female so hungry. Today, it may be the juncos, hopping about our driveway, looking for seeds. The birds are always nearby. Their calls are temple bells reminding me to be grateful.

For other kinds of light, we can turn to our friends and family. Nothing feels more like sunlight than walking into a room full of people who are happy to see me. I think of my son and daughter-in-law on my birthday, Zeke making homemade ravioli and Jamie baking an apple cake, their shining eyes radiating love. Or of my friends, sitting outdoors around a campfire in coats and hats, reciting poetry and singing songs.

We also have the light of young children. My own grandchildren are far away, but I spend time with 9-year-old Kadija. My husband and I are sponsoring her family; they arrived here from Afghanistan, with only the father speaking English, just a few months ago. Already, she can bring me a picture book and read "whale," "porpoise" and "squid" in a voice that reminds me of sleigh bells. I know someday she will be a surgeon, or perhaps a poet.

In our darkest moments, art creates a shaft of light. There is light in a poetry book by Joy Harjo, in a recording by Yo-Yo Ma and in a collection of Monet's paintings of snow.

The rituals of spiritual life will also illuminate our days. In my case, it is sun salutations, morning prayers, meditation and readings from [Thich Nhat Hanh](#), the Vietnamese Buddhist monk and influential Zen master. Also, it's the saying of grace and the moments when I slow down and am present. Whatever our rituals, they allow us to hold on through the darkness until the light returns.

Finally, we will always have the light of memory. When I recall my grandmother's face as she read to me from "Black Beauty" or held my hand in church, I can calm down and feel happy. I feel the light on my skin when I remember my mother at the wheel of her Oldsmobile, her black doctor's bag beside her. Driving home from a house call, she would tell me stories from her life on a ranch in the Great Depression and during the Dust Bowl.

Deep inside us are the memories of all the people we've ever loved. A favorite teacher, a first boyfriend, a best friend from high school or a kind aunt or uncle. And when I think of my people, I'm suffused with light that reminds me that I have had such fine people in my life and that they are still with me now and coming back to help me through hard times.

Every day I remind myself that all over the world most people want peace. They want a safe place for their families, and they want to be good and do good. The world is filled with helpers. It is only the great darkness of this moment that can make it hard to see them.

No matter how dark the days, we can find light in our own hearts, and we can be one another's light. We can beam light out to everyone we meet. We can let others know we are present for them, that we will try to understand. We cannot stop all the destruction, but we can light candles for one another.

Mary Pipher is a clinical psychologist and the author, most recently, of "A Life in Light: Meditations on Impermanence."

Readings:

Feb. 4	Job 7: 1-4, 6-7	Psalm 147	I Cor. 9:16-19, 22-23	Mark 1:29-39
Feb 11	Lev 13: 1-2, 45-46	Psalm 32	I Cor. 10:31-11.1	Mark 1:40-45s

The Liturgy schedule:

Date	Planner(s)	Priest
Feb 4	John and Mary MacMillan	Fr Prakash Lohale
Feb 11	Elizabeth Whelan	Fr Paul McAuley
Feb 18 Lent 1	Volunteer needed	Fr Jack Costello
Feb 25 Lent 2	Volunteer needed	Fr. Ron McDonnell
Mar 3 Lent 3	Volunteer needed	TBA
Mar 10 Lent 4	Sharon McCarthy	Fr Paul McAuley
Mar 17 Lent 5	Volunteer needed	Fr Prakash Lohale
Mar 24 Palm Sunday	Elizabeth Whelan	TBA
Mar 31 Easter	Volunteer needed	TBA

As you noticed, we need planners/coordinators for five Sunday Liturgies.

Please volunteer and email Sharon McCarthy, the Lenten Convenor, smdmcc1@gmail.com in the next few days, before Lent begins. And many thanks for volunteering!

All Liturgies will be virtual — on Zoom — likely until the end of March.

This schedule, as always, is flexible. Planners, feel free to switch if you cannot do a liturgy on the scheduled date. Just be sure to tell the People Progress Reporter, so that we all know. Also, please notify PP early in the week (by the Tuesday before) if you cannot do a reflection.

People Progress Schedule

February: Elizabeth Whelan: erwhelan@icloud.com

March: John MacMillan: met191970@gmail.com

April: Maryanne: maryannestone.jimenez@gmail.com & Roberto: urosma@gmail.com

May: Mary Lou Jorgensen-Bacher mljb57@yahoo.ca

Please send your submissions to the People Progress Reporter by Thursday evening. People Progress welcomes new reporters. Thanks!

Announcements:

- We **need volunteers to coordinate/plan four Lenten Liturgies, plus Easter**. Please see the note under the Liturgy schedule.
- **A reminder: Please continue to save your egg cartons and flats for Elizabeth Stocking**. You can bring them to Elizabeth's Whelan's home, and Elizabeth Stocking will pick them up. Thanks, from both Elizabeths!
- **2023-2024 Financial Report from John MacMillan**

September 1 up to and including February 4, 2024

Donations	\$2,367.49
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Expenses	Priests \$2,100.00 (21 Sundays)
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Insurance	\$97.20
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Room	\$174.78
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Technology	\$133.08
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Music Royalties	\$155.00
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Christmas	\$200.00
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Postage	\$18.92
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Zoom	<u>\$112.00</u>
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Total	\$2,990.98
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Financial Assets

Bank	\$6.16
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Cash	<u>\$43.20</u>
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Total	\$49.36
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Due to your generosity, we were funded almost up to lent. But now it's time for my appeal again! If we do well, we might have enough to last to the end of our year (end of June).

February Birthdays: Happy Birthday to

4 Sharon McCarthy

4 Lucia Silveira

18 Rita Shaughnessy

23 Mary Beth MacMillan

25 Timothy Watson

28 Juan Alas

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Online liturgies are quite straight-forward.

Here are the duties, as published weekly in People Progress (for reference.)

Duties of liturgy planners for virtual masses:

Early in the week before the liturgy:

- Call or email the priest to confirm Sunday's liturgy (contact info will be provided).
- Prepare or find a Reflection and send it to the People Progress reporter by Thursday. Please notify the People Progress reporter early in the week if you cannot do a Reflection.
- Select readers for the 1st and 2nd readings. Check with Sylvia Skrepichuk re: psalm.

On the Sunday of the virtual mass:

- Greet the group (Ask newcomers to introduce themselves)
- Give a brief introduction to the liturgy.
- Read your passage or be prepared to do a reading (if a volunteer is unable to log-in)
- Thank everyone who 'attended' and those who helped (at Announcements)