

Hail Mary, full of Grace, the Lord is with you,



pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen

blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God,

Illustration by Bob Kuhn

Feast of Our Lady of Mercy Prayer

September 2009

Opening Hymn: Gather Us In by Marty Haugen

Verse

Here in this place new light is streaming,
Now is the darkness vanished away,
See in this space our fears and our dreamings
Brought here to You in the light of this day.

Chorus

Gather us in the lost and forsaken,
Gather us in the blind and the lame;
Call to us now and we shall awaken,
We shall arise at the sound of our name.

Verse

We are the young our lives are a mystery.
We are the old who yearn for your face.
We have been sung throughout all of history,
Called to be light to the whole human race.

Chorus

Gather us in the rich and the haughty.
Gather us in the proud and the strong.
Give us a heart so meek and so lowly.
Give us the courage to enter the song.

Verse

Not in the dark of buildings confining,
Not in some heaven light years away,
But here in this place the new light is shining,
Now is the Kingdom, now is the day.

Chorus

Gather us in and hold us forever.
Gather us in and make us your own.
Gather us in all peoples together,
Fire of love in our flesh and our bones.

Invocation:

Leader:

Gracious Lady Mary, beloved Queen of Mercy, we come before you tonight arrayed in our spiritual diversity to invoke your blessing as we begin a new year. Stretch our minds that we may encompass new ideas. Open our ears and hearts that we may hear God's voice echoing in the words spoken in community with one another. Gather us into your mothering embrace that we may draw ever closer to you and your most beloved Son.

All:

Amen.

Reading 1: A Prayer Poem in Honor of Womanfriends by Jan B. Anderson

Let there be in my life those women
who,
knowing and unknowing,
flank my soul with
 courage,
 comfort,
 a sense of place, home, You.

Let them come
 tiptoeing their gifts...
filling my heart's halls
 with the food and drink
of laughter and tears, visions, and memories.

Let them come
 stomping out the wrath of
indignities, indecencies,
injustices, indescribable agonies
 of many sisters gone before,
 many still to come.

Let them live and move
and take up residence in me (I shall risk it)
where, at last,
I/we cannot escape Love....

Psalm 15: from Rejoice, Beloved Woman by Barbara J. Monda

- 1 Who will dwell in your house, O [God]? Who will go with you to the holy mountains?
- 2 It will be she who knows her heart and follows its truth; she who speaks no divisiveness and loves with no strings attached.
- 1 Come with me to the mountains, those of you who live with courage and perform deeds with a song in your hearts.
- 2 You keep your word even when your own needs and safety may be compromised. You show respect toward others regardless of what they do.
- All: You honor my ways and deserve a place next to me. We, together, are mothers and live the truth of who we are.

Reading II: from Truly Our Sister by Elizabeth A. Johnson

Assembled together, the individual portraits of Mary of Nazareth form a mosaic image of a woman of Spirit. Honed by the historical background of Galilean Judaism and interpreted by women's sensibilities, this mosaic delivers a glimpse of an actual woman, a first-century member of an oppressed peasant society, whose walk with the Spirit at a pivotal moment in salvation history made a unique contribution to the good of the world...To call Mary blessed is to recognize the blessedness of ordinary people who are called to participate in the work of God in our own day. If the Christian community in the twenty-first century does not grasp this point, then the proposal to view Mary within the communion of saints loses its foundation and liberating power. You cannot celebrate the work of the Spirit in the life of another person if you do not recognize the Spirit's blessing in your own life.

Reflection:

Leader:

At this time we offer an opportunity to reflect upon the readings heard tonight, and to express your feelings, observations, or hopes for Mount Saint Agnes in the coming year.

Invocations:

Leader: Mary, Mother of Good Counsel...

All: Guide our steps as we journey down the path of knowledge. Keep us from stumbling into error and contention. May we find a greater understanding of both our world and our God.

Leader: Mary, Mirror of Justice...

All: Help us shake off the dust of our complacency. Open our eyes to what is going on around us, globally and locally. And when we see the rights of the helpless being trampled upon in great and small ways, open our mouths with words of outrage and of compassion.

Leader: Mary, Queen of Peace,

All: May we be a beacon of hope in our troubled world. Help us to put an end to hostility and misunderstanding by reaching across the social, cultural, and religious divides that we encounter in our daily lives. Let us follow your son's example, and extend a welcoming hand to all around us without prejudice or price.

Leader: Mary, Source of Compassion,

All: Look upon us with tenderness as we humbly place our personal petitions before you. (The leader will read off intentions recommended to Mount Saint Agnes and invite participants to add their own intentions.)

Leader: We thank you, Mary, for your kind attention to our needs and ever trust in your abiding care.

All: Amen.

Closing Prayer:

Leader:

Gracious God, you gave us Mary to be both our teacher and guide as we seek to live lives that are pleasing to You. May we follow her example of steadfast faith, an open heart and mind, and a willingness to serve those in need. Bless our efforts this year that, in our striving and our learning, we may become mirrors of Mary's virtues in our world.

All:

Amen.

Closing Hymn: Softly and Still arranged by J.C.S.

Softly and still as night comes stealing,
we sing our vespers lay;
Silv'ry chimes of eve are pealing,
it is the end of day.

*O Holy Queen of Heav'n, O Star of Hope so fair,
all praise to thee is giv'n, hear thou our evening prayer.*

Guard us with love until the morrow
and keep our hearts from pain.
Fill us with hope and banish sorrow,
renew our strength again.

*O Holy Queen of Heav'n, O Star of Hope so fair,
all praise to thee is giv'n, hear thou our evening prayer.*

Credits:

Feast of Our Lady of Mercy Prayer 2009:

Composed and assembled by Sacha Ludwig

Cover Art:

"Blessed is the fruit of your womb..." by Rip Kastan