*Nourishing Compassion*

*Image“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.” - Jesus (John 6:35)*

*Welcome*

*Setting the Table*

Gathering & Grounding

Opening Meditation

Breathing, Prayer with Chant

*We are Your sacred Daughters …* (Sung 3 times) *Fill us with Your holy food…*

Quiet moments to be with your self where you are

Sharing how we come

Prayer for Bread & Guidance

Prayer & Meditation through Song: *Bread for the Journey Bret Hesla*

*Beginning and ending lines to Verses*

*Give us bread for the journey, give us bread.*

*Guide our way as we travel, guide our way.*

*Make us one with each other, make us one.*

*Lead us home to the garden, lead us home.*

Quiet Moments to be with where you are now

Contemplating & Naming the Bread We Need

Reflecting Using Imagery

Sharing before we go

*Blessings for the Road*

Closing prayer

Final words and announcements

Blessing one another

*When you were born you cried, and the earth rejoiced.*

*Live your life so that when you die, the earth cries and you rejoice.*

Setting the Table

Welcome, good women of American Martyrs parish, and all those present this evening. I’m delighted to be back to lead another retreat evening on Zoom … Many thanks to the Sisterhood Team for another invitation! I love to create all kinds of safe enough spaces for deep listening and compassionate companionship. I come this evening both in the capacity of facilitating my ministry of Soultending, (and several of you have been to my website and have seen other things I do through [soultending.net](http://soultending.net)) and especially in my capacity as one of Sr. Joyce Rupp’s *Boundless Compassion Facilitators* and as part of her *Boundless Compassion Core Team*. This evening is ultimately about each and all of us committing to and participating in the good, good work of Soul tending, *and*, even more specifically, the meaningful work of compassion. My hope is that this evening’s contemplative, worshipful experience leaves you feeling you have practiced or participated well, in extending both self-compassion and compassion to other - nearby and far away. Let’s take just a moment for you to name in the chat what you hope for this evening. Just finish the phrase there: *I hope for* … Or I hope to be … maybe it’s *I hope for a greater sense of peace, a sense of new life* … You hope to meet some new friends … OR, I hope to be filled with a renewed sense of life, or hope… (Let them name and repeat)

Wonderful, and with the naming of those hopes, those intentions as you come, let me now light both a singular candle and a communal candle (and you can light one where you are if you like, or let these serve for us all) to signify the presence of The Holy One, Divine Love, with each one here, and enfolding all of us as the unique community we form this evening, that will never be together in the same way. And now, a reminder of the invitation to this time as a way to continue setting the table for this evening: *Come enjoy a pot of creative, contemplative worship to warm your spirit andImage nourish your soul. Silence and sharing, scripture and song, ritual and other ingredients will be blended together and served up in a savory dish to not only provide sustenance but vitality for days ahead. Partaking of each piece and the whole, individually and as a community, we will fill with holy goodness, and leave with possible “ingredients or recipes” for sharing with other persons or groups where we tend to “serve up sacred stuff”.* Sisters in the Spirit, the invitation was made, the table has been set, *and you have come*. Tonight, let us dare to trust in Christ’s invitation from John 6, that “*Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty*.” May your spirits be warmed and your souls nourished well through what I will be serving up now, the spiritual sustenance we will be sharing in serving up together …

Gathering and Grounding / Ringing the Bell & Prayer

Let us continue to intentionally ground and open ourselves. To help us do that I’m going to ring this bell three times, once each for our intention to open our body, heart, and mind. With the first ringing we will plant our feet, celebrate our bodies … acknowledge them as gift … how they carry us over a lifetime. How they serve as a vessel for all that is sacred to come in to us, and go out to others … how with each breath, Ruach, the breath of God, comes into us and flows from us, over and over. We can notice any places of tension, and name our intention to release that. Then with the second ring we will move to our heart space, acknowledging and naming our desire for our hearts to be filled with the nourishment of compassion and love … perhaps experiencing compassion and love already there … warmth and peace radiating there. We can notice if there are ways our heart feels closed some, because that happens to us sometimes, from hurt or woundedness. And name our desire for God to help us heal and open our heart space further … And then with the third ring, we will move to our head space, acknowledging the desire to experience the peace of God … noticing how much peace is up there or *not.* Because, the mind can be full of chatter, and chatter that sometimes needs to be emptied out if it is full of obsessive worry, self-judgement or critic.

So here we go. The first bell, for our bodies …. (Silence, then ring a 2nd time) … Our hearts … (Silence, then ring a 3rd time) … our minds … Now take a deep breath … and then another … and let us continue in a spirit of prayer through word and song … I invite you to join me in the chant part when it comes up (staying on mute). Again, the words to the chant are on on your participant sheet and in the chat … *Let us pray:*

*We are Your sacred daughters. We are Your sacred daughter. We are Your sacred daughters.*

*Fill us with Your Holy food.* (2x first time through) (FOR THE CHAT)

Generous Invitation Maker, Ultimate Host, we give thanks for each woman here: Varied in age, ethnicity, race … Generations of women have come, beautiful in our diverse life stories, and also with the similar life themes we experience as well … Bless all who have come to this table. HEAR US SING … (*Refrain*)

Giver of Life, we come this night, some of us feeling spiritually full. Others quite hungry, needing an infusion of your Spirit of Love and Life. Nourish each and all through every part of this sacred meal. HEAR US SING …(*Refrain*)

And yet, Bread of Life, we acknowledge that to receive we must open. And so with this prayer, with this song, we open our senses, our whole being, like a colorful, large pot, to receive the sacred sustenance you would pour into us here … Both for our own renewal and for ladling up and out into the world through our lives … May it be so! (*Refrain 2x*)

*Time of Silence - Quiet Moments to be where we are (*FOR CHAT)

Sharing How We Come - We are going to take about 8 minutes now, to move into break out groups of about 4, and simply share our name, what our hope for this sacred time is, and how we are feeling after the opening grounding and prayer. *These three things will be in the chat, too.* And, after each one names these things briefly, feel free to share more together, about your experience of the opening time. How it has left you feeling, or if a word, phrase or particular part of it spoke to you. Just a few common group rules for group sharing before we go into breakout groups … 1. No one ever has to share. Feel free to pass if you so choose, and that should be respected by others. 2. What is shared in the group, stays in the group. 3. Finally, be sure you move through the questions briefly when it is your turn, making sure there is time for each one who would like to share to be able to. (FOR CHAT: *Name. Your hope for this sacred time. How are you feeling after the opening grounding & prayer time? (IF time: Share whether a particular word, phrase, or part of the opening time spoke to you*.)

Prayer for Bread and Guidance

Welcome back. I hope that time was good yeast, causing much gratitude to rise in your soul. And now together we will enter into a prayer for *bread and guidance* for the journey this fall in the form of a song. I will be the primary singer, and you are invited to join me at the beginning and end of each verse, as the phrase I begin with, immediately repeats, and then repeats once more at the end of the verse after I sing one line after the first two on my own. You have the repeating line for each verse on the participants page that was sent to you. But again, we will put those for each verses in the chat as well. In fact, we’ll post the whole verse in the chat so you can sing the whole verse if you wish. (*Sing. Post lyrics in chat. )*

*Give us bread for the journey, give us bread. (2x)*

*When our legs are getting heavy, and we’re hanging down our heads.*

*Give us bread for the journey, give us bread.*

*Guide our way as we travel, guide our way. (2x)*

*With so many roads before us, where to go is hard to say.*

*Guide our way as we travel, guide our way.*

*Make us one with each other, make us one. (2x)*

*All the walls we’ve built around us, ay we learn to tear them down.*

*Make us one with each other, make us one.*

*Lead us home to the garden, lead us home. (2x)*

*Where we’ll live with al creation, find our place and never roam.*

*Leave us home to the garden, lead us home.*

*Give us bread for the journey… Guide our way as we travel…Make us one with each other, make us one…*

*Time of Silence: Quiet Moments to be where you are*

*(PUT “Time of Silence: Quiet Moments to be where you are” in the chat with heart bread image)*

Contemplating and Naming the Bread We Need

I want to invite us now, out of that song, that prayer for us all … for all human beings of the world, really … *Give us bread for the journey, guide our way as we travel, make us one with each other*… Invite us, to take some time to contemplate and name the nourishment *we,* and then also, *the world,* needs right now … You should have two of the same images of a loaf of bread shaped like a heart (like you see on the screen) on the second page you were sent as a participant for this evening. If you don’t have that page, you can simply draw two separate hearts on a piece of paper and use them in this time. Or, you can also simply keep reflecting on the image you see on the screen, and use that as a focus for this time. If you have the paper with the two images of the heart loaf of bread, or if you draw two separate hearts, or if you are focusing on the image of the heart loaf of bread now on the screen, simply take a few minutes of quiet time in community, to ask yourself, first: “*What do I hunger most for right now*”? Be with that, and see if you can eventually name in one word, *the nourishment you need.* Then write that on the first heart, if you have them nearby. And then second, ask your self, “*What does the world hunger most for right now*? Be with that just a bit, and see if you can eventually name in one word, *the nourishment you feel the world needs - right now*. Then write that on the second heart (if you have them nearby.)

Again, we will put the two prompts for the hearts in the chat right now.

(“*The nourishment I most need right now is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” … “The nourishment I believe the world most needs right now is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” )*

And I will play or hum part of the song softly while we allow time for this reflection. When I end this time, then we will move into break out groups for some sharing for those who would like - always your option - to close this time. May this be fruitful time for each of you, and all of us, to BE with your-Self, and the Holy One who most intimately and deeply knows and loves you … May you savor every moment … truly getting in touch with what nourishment you most need right now, and believe the world needs. *(Screen Share bread image again?)*

(Play; Hum … Offer a minute more .…)

I hope and trust that was meaningful time for you … We are going to move into some break out groups now to give us some opportunity as women, to share “*What nourishment we named we need right now”.* And then when you finish with that round, go around again and share “*what nourishment you feel the world needs right now.”* If you finish with that, then feel free to share anything else stirring in you from tonight. Ok. We’ll take \_\_\_\_ Minutes for this … You should be invited now or soon. (Questions in chat or above their screen: “*The nourishment I most need right now is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” … “The nourishment I believe the world most needs right now is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”*

Welcome back! (IF TIME) If you would like and are willing, just place what nourishment you need right now in the chat ….. (Repeat words…) And then, what nourishment , what bread of life, do you feel the world needs right now? (Repeat words …)

You know, these are really some of our deepest prayers for our selves, and for the world beyond our selves and our families that we are connected to, in the days ahead. And so, I want to encourage you to find a way to keep these nearby. And here are some ideas for that: Cut out the two images of bread if you have them, and place them on your kitchen table, on your frig with a magnet, in a bread basket, anywhere you will see them often to remember this experience, your desire or prayer for these things for your self and the world. If you have access, you might even laminate them and make them into sturdier cards … Or you could cut out a piece of cardboard of the same size and glue or tape them *to that* to make them sturdier…. You could also laminate or glue or tape them *back to back as one card.* You might even choose to create your own small sacred center or worship center for yourself, with the heart loaves or cards and a candle… You could include them on a Thanksgiving arrangement or center piece … And even at thanksgiving time, take time to invite family or friends you are with, at THAT table spread: “*let’s take a moment before we enjoy this nourishment, to go around and share what nourishment we wish or pray for the world at this time*, and then allow a moment of silence or prayer before the meal … whatever is appropriate for you….

Blessings for the Road in Word and Song

And now, it’s about time for us to end this formal time together… And so, I would invite you to join me in a spirit of prayer, and then we’ll have some final words and announcements from Lisa, and a time blessing and sending. Would you join me in prayer?

O Gracious Giver of Every Good Gift, as we have entered this month where we reflect on gratitude, this season of thanksgiving, we give thanks for the good gifts we have received here this evening, Holy nourishment, through this sacred time, listening, singing, praying sharing, with other women… May all that was good here *rise in us like yeast*, good leaven for our lives. Amen… *LISA?* What needs to be said or shared before our final blessing in word and song? …

And now dear sisters, I invite you to put your screen on “Gallery View” if you have not, look at and savor the faces of one another … and with your eyes, your being - with your hand raised or extended if you like - … be extending blessing with me to each other, *even as I alone speak the words of blessing …*

Sisters,

*having received fine food here*

things sacred for savoring …

go now to share *The Bread of Life*

*the bread of your life,*

out there with others yet hungering for savory spiritual food …

mix your own sacred recipes

serve up good communion …

Everyday, yet especially Thanksgiving Day …

*be* the bread and the cup … Amen - E. Matteson

Feel free to join me (muted) if you like in our closing song ! (Start singing - Put words in chat.)

“*When you were born you cried, and the earth rejoiced.*

*Live your life so that when you die, the earth cries and you rejoice.*“ (REPEAT)

Once again, it was so good to be with you … And if anyone wants to linger, take yourself off mute, and simply join in some conversation with me, feel free…

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