

Liturgy for Healing Our Sacred Sites

All readings are from the Common English Bible (CEB) except where noted

Introduction

We begin at the Stony Point Center Farm. This farm reminds us that there used to be many more acres of farmland in Rockland County. Agroindustry and large scale farming have environmental costs often ignored, such as monoculture resulting in less biodiversity, runoff of pesticides into water supplies, overuse of chemicals, overuse of antibiotics, and the depletion of the soil's health. We are working toward the creation of an agricultural district here in Rockland County that would include the gardens at Stony Point Center.

First station: Trial Before Pilate

Sweetwater Cultural Center (formerly Stony Point Presbyterian Church)

One: Lord have mercy

All: Lord have mercy

One: Christ have mercy

All: Christ have mercy

One: Lord have mercy

All: Lord have mercy

When Jesus came before Pilate, he had a choice: he could have released Jesus and instead of Barabbas, but he didn't. Acts of reparations are part of working toward a restored creation. This property was formerly a church; it will now be reconstituted as Sweetwater Cultural Center. We were faced with a choice. What would we choose? Life or death?

A reading from Matthew 27: 15-26

15 It was customary during the festival for the governor to release to the crowd one prisoner, whomever they might choose. **16** At that time there was a well-known prisoner named Jesus Barabbas. **17** When the crowd had come together, Pilate asked them, "Whom would you like me to release to you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ?" **18** He knew that the leaders of the people had handed him over because of jealousy.

19 While he was serving as judge, his wife sent this message to him, "Leave that righteous man alone. I've suffered much today in a dream because of him."

20 But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and kill Jesus. **21** The governor said, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?"

"Barabbas," they replied.

22 Pilate said, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called Christ?"

They all said, "Crucify him!"

23 But he said, "Why? What wrong has he done?"

They shouted even louder, "Crucify him!"

24 Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere and that a riot was starting. So he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I'm innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It's your problem."

25 All the people replied, "Let his blood be on us and on our children." **26** Then he released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus whipped, then handed him over to be crucified.

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Prayer: Four Directions Prayer from The Lakota Prayer Book

By Fr. Charles Flood, SCJ

Edited by Dn. David Nagel, SCJ

East

All good things come from the East The freshening wind brings warm rain and sunshine. Each day guide us to see you in everything we do, everyone we meet. Be kind in your blessings, Lord.

South

The warming south winds bring new growth, gentle rain, healing sunshine. Bless us with enough food and the good things from the earth. As we eat nourishing food help us to know you as the giver of all good gifts, Lord.

West

The sun sets in the West giving us glorious colors in our life. Night can sometimes be scary. The darkness can also mean calming, healing sleep. May good dreams and deep sleep cleanse us from all that is bad or evil. Renew and refresh us, O Lord.

North

North winds sometimes bring stormy weather and snow. Let your warmth in our coldness wrap us as with a blanket of love to keep away all that hurts. May all our people have warm houses and full tables against winter's chill, Lord.

One: Lord have mercy

All: Lord have mercy

One: Christ have mercy

All: Christ have mercy

One: Lord have mercy

All: Lord have mercy

Second station: Jesus is tortured and killed

Stony Point "Downtown" (corner of W. Main and 9W)

One: Lord have mercy

All: Lord have mercy

One: Christ have mercy

All: Christ have mercy

One: Lord have mercy

All: Lord have mercy

Our town centers are deteriorating. What isolation that begets! We become disconnected from each other and lose our sense of place in the world. We forget to be stewards of the land on which we stand.

A reading from Mark 15:16-20

16 The soldiers led Jesus away into the courtyard of the palace known as the governor's headquarters,[a] and they called together the whole company of soldiers. **17** They dressed him up in a purple robe and twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on him. **18** They saluted him, "Hey! King of the Jews!" **19** Again and again, they struck his head with a stick. They spit on him and knelt before him to honor him. **20** When they finished mocking him, they stripped him of the purple robe and put his own clothes back on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

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Prayer: *Psalm 39:7-13, NRSV*

7 “And now, O Lord, what do I wait for?

My hope is in you.

8 Deliver me from all my transgressions.

Do not make me the scorn of the fool.

9 I am silent; I do not open my mouth,

for it is you who have done it.

10 Remove your stroke from me;

I am worn down by the blows of your hand.

11 “You chastise mortals

in punishment for sin,

consuming like a moth what is dear to them;

surely everyone is a mere breath. *Selah*

12 “Hear my prayer, O Lord,

and give ear to my cry;

do not hold your peace at my tears.

For I am your passing guest,

an alien, like all my forebears.

13 Turn your gaze away from me, that I may smile again,

before I depart and am no more.”

One: Lord have mercy

All: Lord have mercy

One: Christ have mercy

All: Christ have mercy

One: Lord have mercy

All: Lord have mercy

Third station: Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus
Immaculate Conception Church/Local Polling station

One: Lord have mercy

All: Lord have mercy

One: Christ have mercy

All: Christ have mercy

One: Lord have mercy

All: Lord have mercy

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Many of our elected officials fail to make decisions that ensure a future on this planet. And there are others elected officials who work hard trying to chart a new course. We lift up the Green New Deal. We pray for the wisdom of those who hold these positions of power. We support the grassroots movements that lead the way consistently. Just as Simon offers help to a situation that seems out of control, these grassroots movements provide some small relief, with great potential.

A reading from Mark, 15:21

21 Simon, a man from Cyrene, Alexander and Rufus' father, was coming in from the countryside. They forced him to carry his cross.

Prayer: *Possibility* by Sharlande Sledge

Fractured people we once were --cracked, broken, dried by the winds of the desert. Come, Lord Jesus!
Deliver us again from the parched places.

Yours are the tears of the Spirit that weep with us.

A church we have become--born in wind and fire, not to be swept heavenward in a blaze of glory but to walk beside you down the dusty roads of this world. Come, Lord Jesus! Show us our God in skin and bones!

Yours is the breath of the Spirit that brought us together.

A resurrected people we will be --joyful, exuberant, risen, confident that your resurrection will restore what once was dead and is now alive. Come, Lord Jesus! Move our feet lightly to the rhythm of your song.

Yours is the movement of the Spirit that will dance with us.

Only you can turn our death into life, our mourning into dancing, our depths of sorrow into wellsprings of joy.

Come, Lord Jesus! Breathe your resurrection Spirit into us once again!

One: Lord have mercy

All: Lord have mercy

One: Christ have mercy

All: Christ have mercy

One: Lord have mercy

All: Lord have mercy

Fourth Station: Mary and John Below the Cross

Ba-Mar Mobile Home Community

One: Lord have mercy

All: Lord have mercy

One: Christ have mercy

All: Christ have mercy

One: Lord have mercy

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All: Lord have mercy

This area has felt the effects of climate change - severe weather patterns, larger storm surges. Hurricane Sandy had devastating effects on the waterfront communities in Stony Point. This was followed by a second storm of challenges in receiving FEMA aid. Community activists fought for their rights and were eventually victorious.

Mary and John are still there, at the foot of the cross. Amid the chaos and everyone abandoning Jesus, they are holding true and "keeping the faith." In the same way, a sense of community has been reclaimed. Out of the devastation came an opportunity to create community, just as a community was created at the foot of the cross. To get here has taken lots of people, time, energy, and visioning. So, too, if we are to see resurrection, we need imagination, resources, and perseverance. We pray for those on the front lines of climate change.

A reading from John 19:25-30

25 Jesus' mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene stood near the cross. **26** When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." **27** Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that time on, this disciple took her into his home. **28** After this, knowing that everything was already completed, in order to fulfill the scripture, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." **29** A jar full of sour wine was nearby, so the soldiers soaked a sponge in it, placed it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to his lips. **30** When he had received the sour wine, Jesus said, "It is completed." Bowing his head, he gave up his life.

Dark Before Dawn, Thomas Merton, from The Living Bread, 1956, pp 155-156

If the future seems dark to us, is it not perhaps because we are witnessing the dawn of a light that has never before been seen? We live in an age in which charity can become heroic as it has never been before. We live, perhaps, on the threshold of the greatest eucharistic era of the world--the era that may well witness the final union of all mankind.

One: Lord have mercy

All: Lord have mercy

One: Christ have mercy

All: Christ have mercy

One: Lord have mercy

All: Lord have mercy

Fifth Station: The Resurrection

The banks of the Hudson River, with a view of the Indian Point Power Plant

One: Lord have mercy

All: Lord have mercy

One: Christ have mercy

All: Christ have mercy

One: Lord have mercy

All: Lord have mercy

The Hudson River is both cleaner than it has been and still very endangered by industry. We see the Indian Point Power Plant in the distance, a plant that will be closed down without a plan for the storage of nuclear waste. We face the risks of nuclear energy as we think of the Fukushima recovery. This fragile "resurrection" reminds us that our work isn't done; this is just the beginning.

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A reading from Matthew 28:1-7

28 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the tomb. **2** Look, there was a great earthquake, for an angel from the Lord came down from heaven. Coming to the stone, he rolled it away and sat on it. **3** Now his face was like lightning and his clothes as white as snow. **4** The guards were so terrified of him that they shook with fear and became like dead men. **5** But the angel said to the women, "Don't be afraid. I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. **6** He isn't here, because he's been raised from the dead, just as he said. Come, see the place where they laid him. **7** Now hurry, go and tell his disciples, 'He's been raised from the dead. He's going on ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there.' I've given the message to you."

Prayer

Everything surrounding us
whispers of resurrection possibilities.
Easter is all around us,
if only we will claim it.
So today, may we put aside all that keeps us trapped in the tombs of our lives--
· all broken hopes
· all poorly chosen actions
· all dashed dreams
· all disrespect for each other and the earth
· all jadedness and despair
and practice resurrection,
· making peace,
· choosing paths favoring creation and community,
· finding innovative, productive ways
to embody your wall-breaking gospel
of justice and compassion
that will bring about balance and healing for ourselves and for our world.
May we, that is, follow in the way of the One
that no grave could seal in,
and build your Easter reign of wholeness and joyfulness on our earth.
Amen.

Written by Susan DeGeorge

One: Lord have mercy
All: Lord have mercy
One: Christ have mercy
All: Christ have mercy
One: Lord have mercy
All: Lord have mercy

Thomas Berry, from *Dream of the Earth*, a chapter entitled "The Hudson River Valley: A Bioregional Story."

"This is the moment of change from a sense of the valley as subservient to human exploitation to a sense of the valley as an integral natural community which is itself the basic reality and the basic value, and of the human as having its true glory as a functioning member, rather than as a conquering invader, of this community. Our role is to be the instrument whereby the valley celebrates itself."