Prayer in the Spirit of Taizé

Tuesday, June 9, 2020, 7:00 p.m.

Church of the Immaculate Conception
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana
Prayer in the spirit of the Taizé Community is a meditative form of common prayer. Gathered in the presence of God, we sing uncomplicated, repetitive songs, uncluttered by too many words, allowing the mystery of God to become tangible through the beauty of simplicity. A few words sung over and over reinforce the meditative quality of prayer. They express a basic reality of faith that can quickly be grasped by the intellect and that gradually penetrates the whole being.

**Welcome and Call to Prayer**

**Cart Dancing with Elvis at the IGA**

It was Saturday afternoon; I found myself at my usual place: the IGA. Hands wrapped around the grocery cart handle, I moved slowly through the produce section listening to music wafting through the air. As I considered the rock hard tomatoes, John Denver sang “Home Grown Tomatoes.” UmUm. Can hardly wait for those big home grown Indiana tomatoes! Onto the Florida sun-ripened oranges and the Beatles singing “Here Comes the Sun.” Awesome! As I neared the tender Georgia peaches, holiness descended on the IGA when Elvis began to sing “Love Me Tender.” Slowly, my cart and I swayed to the sweet sounds of Elvis at his best. I began to hum along with Elvis; then I was softly singing with the King; then a little louder and then, I got really loud and joined Elvis as he sang “Love me tender; love me true. All my dreams fulfill. For my darling I love you and I always will.”

I looked around to see if anybody was laughing and noticed a most wonderful display of Christian community: a lady choosing apples was also humming with Elvis; the man smelling the pineapple had joined us; the woman weighing potatoes smiled, then joined in for a big finish of “for my darling I love you and I always will.” The produce manager clapped, the lady buying blueberries cheered, the Elvis Produce Singers bowed. And God smiled. It was good to act justly toward our neighbor, to love each other tenderly and to dance humbly with our God.

~ Rev. Linda Snider
What is the Condition of Your Heart?

Life brings with it all kinds of experiences. How we handle the ups and downs of life affects the condition of our heart. Heart damage often happens in difficult times. If we are not careful, hard circumstances can produce hardness on the inside of us.

When our hearts are hardened, bad things happen to us. We shut ourselves off from God and others. We become emotionally numb and cold. Our attitudes are critical, skeptical and cynical. Our perspective of people and life is jaded. We lose sensitivity to God, to our own conscience and to other people. We stop giving. We stop caring. We also stop growing. Hard-hearted people are sour and unpleasant. Hard people are ungrateful people.

The quickest way to a hard heart is through unforgiveness, bitterness and revenge. When we hold on to the hurts others inflict on us, or the pain we perceive they have caused us, we open the door to evil. The malice we nurse toward others becomes the monster that ravages us.

A tender heart is a great asset in life. It makes us responsive to God.

What is the condition of your heart — hard or tender?
A READING FROM ECCLESIASTES

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:
a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.
AN INTERCESSORY CONVERSATION

*God:* Come, my child, sit beside me. You look worried and frustrated

*Intercessor:* I’m just tired. Tired of being an adult, tired of being angry, tired of being afraid. Tired, tired, tired.

*God:* Sounds bad. Why is being an adult so hard? Why are you angry? Of what are you afraid?

*Intercessor:* It’s mostly this virus. I have to make decisions and I don’t want to. I don’t want to decide to wear or not wear a mask. Should I order my celery online or is it ok to go to the grocery to pick out my own? Can I freely move around the grocery unprotected? Should I even be in the grocery!? I just want to sit on the back porch and snuggle up next to my grandmother while we slowly sway on her old porch swing. I felt safe there. I want to feel safe again.

*God:* I’m sorry. Sitting next to your grandmother sounds comforting. What is making you afraid? Why are you angry?

*Intercessor:* All of this! I can’t go where and when I want! The red mask fogs up my glasses and the blue one makes my eyes look pretty but it keeps slipping down my nose! My hands are so dry from all the washing, they not only feel like sand paper, they could be used as sandpaper! And the smell of hand sanitizer makes me want to vomit! Mostly I am afraid for my grandchildren and the others I love deeply. Will they get the virus? Will they have to go to the hospital alone? My heart quakes at this thought. I pray for those who have lost loved ones to this horrible disease, but I also pray my family will be spared.

I am also afraid and angry about what is happening in our country: the death of George Floyd, the violence from the rioting, the possibility of more disturbances in the future. I am also concerned about the lives of black young men who are taught from a young age to behave differently when approached by the police and other people in authority. It is not fair. It is not right. It is sad.

*God:* I am glad you have shared all that you have. Sharing is a good thing. Is it ok if I share something with you? Close your eyes. Stretch out your arms. Turn your palms up. Listen. Jesus is talking to the children. He’s telling them he will be with them whatever happens. Then he is quiet; he is comforting; he is loving. Now fold your hands to your heart. Open your eyes. Breathe in strength, power and joy. Go in peace. I love you. Amen.
SILENCE (10 minutes)

RITUAL OF LIGHT
Tonight we light candles as a sign of God’s presence among us and we pray especially for:

Healthcare workers, first responders, staff and residents of nursing homes, especially those in Providence Health Care;

Our family members and other loved ones;

All who suffer because of the sin of racism;

The unemployed and those struggling to make ends meet;

The health of the world community;

The healing of this planet Earth;

Staff Members, Providence Associates, and Sisters of Providence.
All Powerful God,

Life is a mixture of events and feelings. One day we are dancing in the grocery to an Elvis song and the next we are walking quickly in and out of that same grocery before we get infected with COVID-19. We pray with hope and anticipation that soon the world will be made whole and healthy and that justice for all your children will reign. Until then, we know your tender love is our true constant. May we be encouraged to do justice and walk humbly in this everlasting knowledge. Amen.
Special Thanks

Thank you to the Taizé community in France who graciously responded to our request to use their recorded music and lyrics due to the special circumstances of the global pandemic. The email indicated that they are receiving such requests from around the world.

Information about Taizé

An information sheet about the Taizé community and Taizé common prayer is available at the rear entrance of the church.

For additional information about Taizé visit www.taize.fr/en. Recordings, books, music and videos from Taizé are available through GIA Publications at www.giamusic.com

Join us for Taizé Prayer throughout 2020!

THE MICAH MANDATE

Second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

July 14
August 11
September 8
October 13
November 10
December 8