

# LENTEN SERVICE OF PRAYER

Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Trinity Chapel

Can You Drink the Cup?

Holding the Cup: The Cup of Sorrow

## As We Gather

*Henri Nouwen begins his deeply personal book, Can You Drink the Cup, with the story of his early vocation to the priesthood and his ordination in 1957, at which time his uncle, a priest, gave to Henri the gold chalice that he had used for many years. In his later years, while living and working at the L'Arche Daybreak Community, Henri reflects on Jesus' question to James and John: "Can you drink the cup that I am going to drink?" The cup becomes a metaphor for life, and the question for all of us becomes "Can we hold the cup of life in our hands? Can we lift it up for others to see and can we drink it to the full?"*

## Welcome

## Opening Prayer

**The Lord is our Shepherd who leads us beside still waters. Christ restores our souls, and the Spirit leads us in right paths. Even though we walk through the darkest valleys, we fear no evil for God is with us.**

## Reading of Scripture

### Matthew 20: 20-23

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked a favor of him. And he said to her, 'What do you want?' She said to him, 'Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.' But Jesus answered, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?' They said to him, 'We are able.' He said to them, 'You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.'

### Matthew 26: 39

And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.'

## Reflection

## Closing Prayer

**Gracious and loving God,  
We remember that you are the Source of all that sustains us.  
You are compassion, hearing all who call out for mercy.  
You are healing, offering wholeness to those who cry out in pain.  
You are truth, showing the way to those who seek to know you.  
You are hope, bringing the promise of a new day to all people.  
Holy One, you have blessed us with abundance and joy.  
and the grace to share these blessings in Christ's name.  
So, we praise you and seek to renew our trust in you as our Creator,  
Redeemer and Guide.  
Open our eyes to your healing power and mercy.  
Change our hearts so that we trust the gifts of Christ's love and light,  
We pray to you in Jesus' name. Amen**

## Reflection Questions

- “A life that is not reflected upon isn't worth living.”
- “Before we drink, we dare to say, ‘This is my life, the life that is given to me, and it is this life that I have to live, as well as I can. My life is unique.’”
- “By holding our cup, we claim who we are and what we are called to live.”
- When you reflect on your life, what images or thoughts come to mind?
- What does it mean for you to hold your life? What feels heavy? What feels light? What feels unique?
- In holding our cup, Nouwen challenges us to look deeply into it and become aware of our sorrows. The places we would perhaps rather forget and pass over only to remember the highlights of our lives. He says of himself, “I have become deeply aware of my own sorrow-filled heart...I know that my sorrows are mine and will not leave me.”
- What sorrows are you aware of in your life?
- How does knowing, reflecting, and talking to Jesus about your sorrows and losses, help you “hold” your cup?
- How have, or might, your sorrows separate vs. draw you closer to Jesus?
- “When the moment to drink that cup came for Jesus, he said: ‘My soul is sorrowful to the point of death. ‘Why then could he still say yes? He possessed a trust beyond betrayal, a surrender beyond despair, a love beyond all fears. This intimacy beyond all human intimacies made it possible for Jesus to allow the request to let the cup pass him by become a prayer directed to the one who had called him ‘My beloved.’”

(Discussion questions are from the Henri Nouwen Society.)