

Solidarity Sunday 2003

A Guide for Small Faith-Sharing Communities

This Guide is intended to be used before Solidarity Sunday which is October 5, 2003. In the Roman Catholic calendar it is the 27th Sunday of the church year. In the Common calendar it is Proper 22 and the first reading is Exodus 20: 1-4, 7-9, 12-20 (the ten commandments). The readings below are taken from the Roman Catholic lectionary of 1969 in an inclusive version used by Dignity/San Francisco.

This Guide should be adapted as necessary especially in the areas headed Time for Reflection and Sharing and Considerations for Action. In order to help us improve this Guide please feel free to contact the authors Tom Kaun at tomkaun@yahoo.com or Bro. Dick Olson, SM at BdickSM@yahoo.com with any suggestions.

In the name of the God who is Lover, Beloved, and ever-living Spirit. *Amen.*

May the grace and peace of Christ be with us. *Amen.*

Throughout history God has manifested love and care for those who have suffered from violence, hatred, and oppression. We commend all the victims of homophobic violence to the healing mercy of God who binds up all our wounds and enfolds us in gentle care. And we commend the entire community of humanity to the Spirit of Wisdom who gives her gifts where she may without fear or favor.

FIRST READING

Sisters and brothers, listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah

5: 1-7

Let me sing my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard.

My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.

He dug it, cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice red grapevines.

In the middle he built a tower he hewed out a wine vat there too.

He expected it to yield fine grapes: wild grapes were all it produced.

And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah, I ask you to judge between me and my vineyard.

What more could I have done for my vineyard that I have not done?

Why, when I expected it to yield fine grapes, has it yield wild grapes?

Very well, I shall tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard:

I shall take away its hedge, for it to be grazed on, I shall knock down its wall, for it to be trampled on.

I will let it go to waste, unpruned, uncultivated, overgrown with brambles and thorn bushes, and I shall command the clouds to rain no rain on it.

Now, the vineyard of YAHWEH SABAOTH is the House of Israel, and the people of Judah are the planting God cherished.

God expected fair judgment, but found injustice, uprightness, but heard cries of distress.

SECOND READING

Sisters and brothers, listen to the words of the Paul to the Romans

4: 2-4, 6-9

I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to come to agreement with each other in Christ; and I ask you, Sysygnus, really to be a "partner" and help them. These women have struggled hard for the gospel with me, along with Clement and all my other fellow workers, whose names are written in the book of life.

Never worry about anything, but tell God all your desires of every kind in prayer and petition shot through with gratitude, and the peace of God which is beyond our understanding will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus. Finally beloved. let your minds be filled with everything that is true, everything that is honorable, everything that is upright and pure, everything that is pleasing and commendable – with whatever is good and praiseworthy. Keep doing everything you learned from me and were told by me and have heard or seen me doing. Then the peace of God will be with you.

Jesus said to the chief priests and elders: "Listen to another parable:

"There was a householder who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a tower, then leased it out to tenants, and went to another country. When the harvest time had come, the owner sent slaves to the tenants to collect the produce. But the tenants seized the slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again the landowner sent other slaves, more than the first time; and the tenants treated them in the same way. Finally the owner sent the heir to them, saying, 'They will respect my heir.' But when the tenants saw the heir, they said to themselves, 'This is the one who will inherit the property; come, let us kill this one and have the inheritance.' So they seized and threw the heir out of the vineyard, and killed the heir.

"Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will be done to those tenants?"

They said to Jesus, "The owner will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give over the produce at the harvest time."

Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was Yahweh's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes'? Therefore I tell you, the reign of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of it."

TIME FOR REFLECTION AND SHARING

Some questions to consider:

1. In what way have we rejected the cornerstone which Yahweh has selected?
2. How have we participated or acquiesced in violence, verbal or physical, against lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered people, especially members of our own community?
3. What kind of vineyard are we planting which will provide the best harvest of fine grapes?
4. How do we promote fair judgment rather than injustice, and uprightness instead of cries of distress?

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

Let us pray for the church: *(Encourage those assembled to share their individual intentions)*

Loving God who will not abandon us;

Give our leaders courage.

They do not know the way of peace, there is no fair judgment in their course,

They have made their own crooked paths, and no one treading them knows any peace.

We pray: *Loving God, hear our prayer.*

Let us pray for victims of anti-gay violence: *(Silence for prayer)*

Be not afraid my children of those who cannot kill the soul.

Your loving Parent hears and will save.

We pray: *Loving God, hear our prayer.*

Let us pray for unity, rather than uniformity in our civil and religious communities: *(Silence for prayer)*

May the community accept the gifts of your gay and lesbian children.

Put on saving justice like a breastplate, salvation like a helmet;

The clothes of vengeance like a tunic, jealousy like a cloak.

We pray: *Loving God, hear our prayer.*

Let us pray for those who cause harm to others: *(Silence for prayer)*

Grant us fair judgment.

May we all see the harm to the innocent and intervene to save the afflicted.

We pray: *Loving God, hear our prayer.*

COLLECT

God heals our wounds and strengthens us in our weakness, let us pray as Christ taught us:

Our Mother and Father, ...

CONSIDERATIONS FOR ACTION

The acts of reflecting on the Word of God and sharing prayer impel us to act.
Consider one of the following as a possible personal response to what you have heard and prayed.

1. Sponsor the materials for making Solidarity Sunday packets.
2. Help put together the ribbon/prayer card packets in the weeks leading up to October 6.
3. Help hand out Solidarity Sunday ribbons at your local church by or on October 6.
4. Tell friends and co-workers about the Solidarity Sunday project.
5. Ask your family members in another area to promote Solidarity Sunday in their place of worship.
6. Examine your conscience about violence, both physical and emotional, you might have committed against another.
7. Join one of the organizations particularly working against homophobia. Consider PFLAG (www.pflag.org; 1726 M Street, NW Suite 400 Washington, DC 20036; ph: 202.467.8180) or GLAAD (www.glaad.org; 1.800.GAY.MEDIA), for example.
8. Contact a local public or parochial school and offer to do presentation on the effects of anti-gay violence.
9. Share the story of one of those injured or killed by anti-gay violence. The Matthew Shepard Foundation (www.matthshepard.org) and the Matthew's Place (www.matthewsplace.com) Web sites are good places to start.
10. Recite the Solidarity Pledge and/or the Solidarity Prayer (see below) with any group you belong to.

CONCLUDING RITE

Prayer of Blessing (Solidarity Prayer)

Loving God,
You are the Creator and Lover of all.
You wish us to live in solidarity with each other
and to rejoice in our diversity.
We pray that all your lesbian, gay,
bisexual, transgendered and straight children
may experience justice,
enjoy peace and spread your love
throughout the world.

We pray in the name of Jesus the Christ,
who welcomed all into his circle of friends.
Amen.

May God bless us with mercy,
strengthen us with love,
and enable us to walk in charity and peace.
Amen.

The service might conclude with a version of "Ubi Caritas," e.g. "Where Charity and Love Prevail," Paul Benoit and Omer Westendorf, World Library Publications (*Gather Comprehensive* 625); "Where True Love and Charity Are

Found / Ubi Caritas," Richard Proulx, GIA Publications (*Gather Comprehensive* 631); "Ubi Caritas," by Bob Hurd or Laurence Rosania, both in *Breaking Bread 2002*, Oregon Catholic Press.

Adapted from "Order of Blessing for a Victim of Crime or Oppression." *Book of Blessings*. Study Ed. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1989.

Solidarity Pledge

I pledge:

I will work for civil and human rights for all people, including gays, lesbians, bisexuals and the transgender [sic]. Civil rights are not special rights.

I will seek to stop jokes and unkind language about anyone, including gays, lesbians, bisexuals and the transgender when spoken in my presence. Words that hurt and bigotry are not funny.

I will speak out against any slander, debasement, lies, or dehumanization of anyone, including gays, lesbians, bisexuals and the transgender, including when spoken by political or religious leaders. Violent speech leads to physical violence.

I will work to stop physical violence against anyone, including violence against gays, lesbians, bisexuals and the transgender. Violence against any person is violence against all people.

Dignity USA (<http://www.dignityusa.org/solidarity/index.html#pledge>)