



GREAT ENDEAVORS MINED & SHARED

from an International Adult Faith Formation Best Practices Study

98 – February 2019

A Best Practice: Lenten Evening Prayer: Who is My Neighbor?

Many parishes celebrate Evening Prayer, especially during the seasons of Advent and Lent. Evening Prayer – part of the daily prayer of the church, *The Liturgy of Hours* - consists of

- A hymn corresponding to the liturgical season
- Two psalms with psalm prayers
- A short passage from Scripture
- A response: a verse of Scripture; sometimes liturgical poetry (the Scripture reading can also be followed by a homily or reflection)
- The Magnificat
- Intercessions
- The Lord's Prayer
- A concluding prayer and blessing

See also: <https://universalis.com/> and <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgy-of-the-hours/index.cfm>.

Last year, St. Ignatius Martyr Parish, Long Beach, NY planned two Lenten Evening Prayers which connected the prayer with some issues of the day.

Sr. Diane Morgan, OP, pastoral associate, explains that the two evenings – another way to look, learn, and prayerfully reflect on our current world situation - focused on the theme: Who is My Neighbor? and explored:

- Earth is our neighbor (with an emphasis on water)
- Immigrants Among Us



The Design of the Evenings

Each gathering of Evening Prayer followed the format of the church's praying of Evening Prayer. The Scripture for the evening was chosen because it connected with/shed light on the theme for that day. Following the proclamation of Scripture, a short reflection was given by someone from the local community who had experience and expertise in the theme for the evening.

Who is My Neighbor: Earth is Our Neighbor

The publicity and invitation for this first evening explained:

Earth is our neighbor.

This night we pray and reflect
on God's creation and the gift of water.

As St. Francis of Assisi reminds us,
"Praised be You my Lord through Sister Water,
so useful,
humble, precious and pure..."

Praise be You my Lord through our Sister,
Mother Earth
who sustains and governs us,
producing varied fruits with colored flowers
and herbs."

A representative from Grassroots Environmental Education
will offer a reflection this evening
to help us gain a better understanding of
where our drinking water comes from
and
how we can have an impact
on its quality.



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In addition to the prayers, psalms, songs, and quiet of Evening Prayer, the participants reflected on:

- The Genesis story of creation
- The reflection by Matthew Rizzo from Grassroots Environmental Education, Port Washington, NY (<https://www.grassrootsinfo.org/>)
- The words of Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* – *On Care for Our Common Home* (http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html):

Fresh drinking water is an issue of primary importance, since it is indispensable for human life and for supporting terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

Sources of fresh water are necessary for health care, agriculture and industry....

One particularly serious problem is the quality of water available to the poor... Every day, unsafe water results in many deaths and the spread of water-related diseases ...

Underground water sources in many places are threatened by the pollution produced in certain mining, farming and industrial activities ...

... Access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival, and as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights ...

Laudato Si' ~ #28, 29, 30

Who is My Neighbor: Immigrants Among Us

As the parish celebrated the second Lenten Evening Prayer, all parishioners were invited:

Our two Lenten Evening Prayers come under the title,
“Who is my neighbor?”

Earlier this month we reflected and prayed seeing Earth as our neighbor, especially through the gift of water.

On April 5 we will pray and reflect on
immigrants as our neighbors.
Conversations about immigration are complex and difficult.

Our speaker this evening, Liz O’Shaughnessy, will offer an insight into this reality of our day.

Liz is the executive director at CoLoKi Inc., the non-profit organization that runs the Freeport Trailer.
(CoLoKi stands for Compassion, Love, Kindness.)

The trailer was established in 2002 as a hiring site for day laborers, but has since grown to become much more.

Freeport Trailer provides vouchers for the men to purchase work boots, so our freewill offering is “BUCKS FOR BOOTS.”

During this celebration of Evening Prayer, in addition to the prayers, psalms, songs and quiet, the parishioners reflected on:

- Matthew 25: 31-40



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- The reflection by Liz O'Shaughnessy from CoLoKi, Inc. (<http://www.colokiinc.com/>)
- The words of Pope Francis:

"The throwaway culture is not of Jesus.
The other is my brother, beyond every barrier
of nationality, social extraction or religion."
(February 15, 2017)

"How often in the Bible the Lord asks us
to welcome migrants and foreigners,
reminding us that we too are foreigners."
(February 18, 2017)

Some Responses and Surprises

Sr. Diane reflects on some of the responses to these opportunities:

- "Using the Scripture reading from the Book of Genesis was intended to make the connection with care of creation. This well-known passage was heard in a new light for many."
- "Some of the information was a surprise for those who participated: hearing where the water we use on Long Island actually comes from under our feet; the reality that it's not piped in from New York City or upstate New York."

- "Some other new information for the parishioners was the reality of salt intrusion into the aquifers as well as the effects of pesticides."
- "Periodically our pastor has done columns in our Sunday bulletin on our moral obligation to care for creation, quoting *Laudato Si'* and the ecological teachings of Pope Benedict and Pope St. John Paul II. Perhaps it's not surprising, but – even though many have appreciated a chance to deepen their understanding and call – he has received some comments that this is a political issue (doesn't have anything to do with morality or our faith) and/or that climate change is a hoax, etc."

Some GEMS Wonderings

- Have there been times that you have combined prayer experiences and ongoing formation? How might you do it? (Is prayer always a part of ongoing formation opportunities?)
- What other topics might be helpful and/or needed for your parishioners at this time?
- What topics might be challenging for your parishioners to hear? How do you listen to their feelings? How do you help people look at both sides of an issue? How do you present the Church's teaching?



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Past issues of **GEMS**
are archived at www.janetschaeffler.com

Additional ideas for Adult Faith Formation Planning and Best Practices can be found:

- *Deepening Faith: Adult Faith Formation in the Parish*
<https://www.litpress.org/Products/4652/Deepening-Faith>
- *The Seasons of Adult Faith Formation*
http://www.lifelongfaith.com/store/p25/The_Seasons_of_Adult_Faith_Formation.html and <http://www.lifelongfaith.com/2015-adult-faith-formation-symposium.html>