

Opening Ritual for EGC

Opening Chant

Gather us O God,
Body, spirit, soul and mind.
Gather us O God,
One in union now with you.
(Monica Brown)

Opening Prayer

SPIRIT IS WITH US *(based on John 15:26, and Acts 1: 1-5)*

We gather to renew our confidence
in a more illumined future...
We give ourselves to this emerging future,
knowing that our choices,
no matter how small,
resonate across every strand of this cosmic web.

We are not alone as future-forgers:
in our fear
that keeps us looking back over our shoulder,
Spirit is with us.
In our passion to create a holy future,
Spirit is with us.
In our resolve to face and overcome
all that keeps us from our ideals,
Spirit is with us.

Lift us up, abiding Spirit,
above all obstacles,
and grant us a glimpse
of what is possible
when hearts and minds discover
that you are in our fears,
our hopes and our commitments.
Amen.

(If Darwin Prayed: Prayers for Evolutionary Mystics - Bruce Sanguin)

Chant

I go before you into Galilee

I will see you there.

(Catherine Teresa Martin RSM)

Reading

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

...While we stand on the shoulders of many great women who have gone before us, we also feel a responsibility for those who will follow after us. We want them to know there is a spirit working in them that can do infinitely more than we can ask or even imagine...

For that to happen, we all need to get ourselves to places where living water flows. We need to keep the conversation going; speak our truth; trust our inner wisdom; listen to our bodies; connect to the seasons and cycles of the earth. We need to stay awake; pay attention; dig down deeper; and simply breathe. We need to leave room for mystery; honour our questions; and, perhaps most importantly, be willing to pay the price to see our visions and dreams come true.

We are midwives of an unnamed future. We never know when the day or the hour will come when the future we have been birthing will break through and be ready to be named. But even as we say that, we realize that this birth is not only something that will occur in the distant future. Change is in the air we breathe. The time is now. The water is breaking and the midwives are here. New life is crowning...

*(From: Midwives of an Unnamed Future: Spirituality for Women in Times of Unprecedented Change
Mary Ruth Broz, RSM & Barbara Flynn)*

Chant

Lead us, guide us in Your way,

Lead us, guide us in Your way,

Lead us, guide us in Your way,

Your holy way, O my God.

(Monica Brown)

Reading

UNION WITH CHRIST

...The works of Mercy are not the sisters' works but God's. This consciousness is the source of energy and freedom. One relies not on oneself but on God.

Crucial in the spiritual journey is the moment one hands over to God all one's endeavours, realizing that one's own efforts apart from God have accomplished and can accomplish nothing. It is the realization that this is God's world, God accomplishes its salvation, that it is God who acts within and through each one in doing all that is good.

Thus Catherine enjoyed freedom of spirit in accomplishing the works of mercy. In tune with God in whom she dwelt, she moved forward with works and moved back from them as circumstances dictated. The poor always remained God's poor and, though she was called to serve them, their care was basically God's affair.

(Elizabeth Carroll, *"The Spirit of Catherine McAuley: Its Relevance to Contemporary Challenges"*)

Chant

I go before you into Galilee,
I will see you there.

(Catherine Teresa Martin RSM)



CHAPTER PRAYER

Holy Spirit, from the beginning of time you dwell
in the heart of the universe and in all of life.

You continually pray in us with
“sighs too deep for words,”
enveloping us with love and compassion.

Enlighten us now with your wisdom
that we may make wise choices for the good
of the congregation as we seek to renew
our constitutions.

Help us to know our lives as pure gift
and to grow in awareness of how
we are connected to all that has been,
all that is, and all that will be.

Stir up the flame of love within us as we continue
our journey together to create a culture
of mercy and compassion in our homes,
our communities and our world.

Amen.

Closing Chant

In paths you have not known, I will lead you;
I will guide your steps into the light.
And though the way you go may be uncertain,
Do not fear for I am at your side.

(Marie Dunne)