

# Prayer of Gratitude for Community, 2003

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*Transcription of the prepared text*

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Let us pray...  
Consciously now in community  
we become quiet.  
Finally, the Sacred Presence within us and among us  
is sensed best in silence.  
Our words are stammering utterances,  
seeking to express the inexpressible.  
Only when we finally have no words  
are we rendering reverence and recognition  
to that Mystery of Being  
which is the font and creative source of all that is.

In silence, then, let us be mindful,  
aware and awash with wonder  
before the miracle, the grace, the gift of life.  
Gratitude rises in our being –  
gratitude for belonging to a community like this,  
a community engaged in tangible care –  
making a difference in a child's life by spending an hour  
of attention, affirmation and affection  
–giving Kids Hope;  
creating a center for people  
where groceries and clothing and shelter are freely offered;  
providing a place of loving care for those  
whose caregivers need some respite from the strain of constant caring.

How good it is to be together –  
a community in which we have learned not only to care  
and concretely engage in compassionate ministry,  
but where we have learned the joy of human community –  
the fun of a party,  
the communion of a group of women gathered around a quilt in the making,

balloons in worship  
children delighting and gray-haired saints  
having so much fun they almost feel guilty,  
because it was not always thus.

A community free of tribal instinct and judgmental spirit,  
a community in which we are intentionally set free  
from all that still marks so much religious observance –  
fear and guilt and heavy obligation.

Holy Presence, accessed most profoundly in wordless wonder,  
our words are but triggers to awaken our imagination, our awareness –  
in silence, grant an epiphany of Grace amazing and overflowing  
that has brought us together in this gathering,  
this community.

We gather with such a diversity of desires, hopes, fears, longings.  
Each of us has those matters that touch us most deeply –  
hear the sighs and celebrations of our hearts.

We image the one in whom we have glimpsed the Eternal Mystery  
and we come seeking there our soul's rest,  
refreshment in our weariness.

O Lord, hear our prayers.