

Church of the Divine Love

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PROPER 17

AUGUST 29, 2021

9:00 A.M.

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn #213 – **Come away to the skies**

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria (S-280 in hymnal) page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9**

Psalm 15

Second Lesson: **James 1:17-27**

Gradual Hymn #291 – **We plow the fields, and scatter**

Gospel: **Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23**

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze

Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, Form VI page 392

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn #556 – **Rejoice, ye pure in Heart!** (vs 1,2,4,5)

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:

Eucharistic Prayer A page 361

Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal) page 362

The Lord's Prayer page 364

| | |
|--|----------|
| The Breaking of the Bread, Anthem & Prayer | page 337 |
| The Communion of the People | |
| Communion Hymn – #423 – Immortal, invisible, God only wise vs 1,3,5 | |
| Post Communion Prayer | page 365 |
| Prayer of St. Francis | page 833 |
| Dismissal Hymn #711 – Seek ye first (middle verse on facing page) | |
| Dismissal | |

Sermon Sunday August 29, 2021

Deuteronomy 4: 1-2,6-9; Psalm 15; James 1: 17-27; Mark 7: 1-8,14-15,21-23.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

We all have certain core traditions and beliefs that are important to us. They make us who we are, they define our own behaviors and the way we think other people should behave. That is what lies behind the Gospel passage from Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23.

As usual, the Pharisees and Jesus were having a difference of opinion. The Pharisees were upset because Jesus and his disciples did not take part in the Jewish hand-washing ritual before they ate. To the Pharisees, Jesus and his disciples committed a sin. The Pharisees were not the only people who get upset when traditions are not followed. We get upset when people do not follow our traditions. We sometimes have to part with our traditions, and that is not always easy for us to accept. We must not think that the Pharisees are completely bad. They were dedicated to obeying and pleasing God, and that desire led to distinctive practices such as kosher food and circumcision. These practices helped them to keep their identity as God's chosen people in a pagan world. Their traditions grew out of a need to keep their identity.

Even though the Jewish law was quite detailed, it left room for interpretation in many cases. The Pharisees used their desire to obey God to create rules to clarify the law in these situations. Over time these rules became so hard and fast that they became a surrogate law that the Jewish leaders regarded as being equal to Scripture. They lost sight of the difference between God's law and their opinion. Jesus said that this was their sin. Jesus did not condemn all tradition. He only condemned those traditions that were elevated to sacred status. The church is responsible for preserving tradition, but it must make a clear distinction between essential scriptural teachings and non-essential traditions.

When he responded to the Pharisees' question, Jesus went right to the heart of the issue. The Pharisees wanted to hold on to human tradition at all costs when they should have been more concerned with teaching God's deeper requirements of love, compassion, and justice. God is more concerned with a spiritual cleansing and purifying. If our hearts have been purified, our prayer and behavior will be in line

with what God wants. If we act out of good hearts, we will know how to behave even if we don't know the exact rule for a particular situation.

While a sense of tradition is desirable and necessary at times, a problem occurs when tradition is substituted for true worship or true faith. When the actions associated with our traditions become more important than the meaning of the traditions, we can get sidetracked. The Pharisees were more concerned with strict observance of Jewish laws than they were about true faith in God. The Pharisees were concerned about keeping God's people distinct and keeping them from becoming assimilated with the larger culture. This effort to be distinct included rigid observance of rules, but the observance of rules covered up their lack of inward love and devotion. They were concerned about not letting germs and pollution go into their bodies, but Jesus said that they and we should be more concerned about the filth that comes out of our mouths-lying, cheating, etc. The Pharisees were concerned about the letter of the law including their rules and regulations, but Jesus emphasized the spirit of the law. We must beware of Christian leaders who appear to be very religious by their actions, but who are really glorifying themselves instead of glorifying God. We should never honor anyone above God. Only he is truly worthy of our praise.

Each and every one of us has a heart problem, and not just a physical one. The heart is a fountain out of which much that affects our lives flows. If the heart is affected by sin, it becomes deceitful and wicked. Therefore, the heart is a source of most of the evil that defiles man. The world is enticing, but for its pull to work, we have to want what it is offering. We do the stupid stuff that we do because it is our human nature. We have to be aware of our sinful nature. When we give in to temptation, we have no one to blame but ourselves. What we eat and drink can't hurt and defile us. Only what comes out of us-ungodly words and actions-can defile us. Jesus wants us and his disciples to see that the core issue always comes down to what is in the heart. Ritual external purity is not necessarily the same as genuine interior piety. We are being hypocrites if we vainly honor God with our lips while our hearts are estranged from him. The source of defilement is more internal than external. It is more about who we are than foods or filth we avoid. Jesus defined true piety as a commitment from the heart totally dedicated to loving service of God and for others. Listening and doing are two different things.

When God looks at us, the first thing he sees is the state of our heart. God doesn't care about what we look like on the outside. He's more concerned about what's on the inside. He has more sympathy and compassion for a poor beggar in rags who has true faith than he does for rich rulers who wear fine clothes but have rotten hearts and souls. If we don't take time to have our hearts purified by God once in a while, we won't be able to receive his blessings. Jesus argued that the observance of purity was not needed because the kingdom of God is for everyone-Jews, Gentiles, those who would observe the purity laws and those who could not keep them. Everyone is equal before God.

Those who are holier than thou often have the belief that they can judge others. When that attitude is observed from afar, it is not pretty. These people are often the same people who on the surface observe sacred rituals. They have no inward disposition towards God. Hence Jesus' reference to the filth that comes from the inside. Jesus sets us free to look at ourselves and see our internal, sinful nature. We are free to accept the grace to choose God's mercy, but we can't admit that we need outside help. We need outside help to take in goodness and bear good fruit. If our hearts belong to God, nothing else matters. All we have to do is love God with our hearts, not our heads.

We have to ask ourselves what the interests of God are, and what does God think about the way we live our lives. Does the way we live our lives reflect a way of life that is in sync with God and his plan for our lives? While our Christianity should shape our behavior, it runs deeper than our behavior. It has implications for how we live our lives, but it is also mysticism before it is morality, faith before it is action, the seed of a new life before it is the fruit of that new life. Those who would serve the interests of God can do so by giving expression to joy in their lives. Those who feel God's love have much to offer the hurting and disconnected in our world. **Amen!**

Seek ye first (middle verse)

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

| | | | |
|--------------|----------|-------------------------|----------------|
| 14 PENTECOST | 9:00 AM | HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II | (also on zoom) |
| | 10:00 AM | VESTRY MEETING | |
| MONDAY | 8:00 AM | AA MEETING | |
| WEDNESDAY | 7:00 PM | AL-ANON MEETING | |
| THURSDAY | 10AM-2PM | THRIFT SHOP | |
| | 8:00 PM | AA MEETING | |
| SATURDAY | 10AM-2PM | THRIFT SHOP | |
| 15 PENTECOST | 9:00 AM | HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II | (also on zoom) |

SUPPORT THE FOOD DRIVE DROP-OFF IN THE KITCHEN

Prayer for Grace and Favor:

Dear God, we ask that you provide for our needs, we ask for your grace and favor. We pray for your blessings to cover us; we pray that you would help us to prosper and make every plan that you have birthed in our heart to succeed. We pray that others would take notice of your goodness and could not help but say, “these are the ones that the Lord has blessed.” Shine your light in us, through us. May we make a difference in this world, for your glory and purposes. Set your way before us. May all your plans succeed. We may reflect your peace and hope to a world that so desperately needs your presence and healing. In Jesus Name, Amen.

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Give to all who suffer the refreshing waters of your compassion and healing. Make them dwell in the safety of your care even in the midst of all that troubles them. Especially we remember before you:

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| Girard Bishop | People of Haiti | Dorothy |
| Nathan Treadwell | John Loubengeiger | Chris Dickson |
| Michael Echevarria | Francisco Febres | Del |
| Martinisi Family | Michael & Family | John Rocco |
| Charlotte H. | Bernie Walther | James |
| Julia | Mo (Rachael) | Warren |
| Bill Conklin Sr. | Anthony Paribello | Kate Jones |
| Barbara Curran | Edward Lent & family | Laura |
| Frances & Donna Mongelli | Christopher & his family | Aidan |
| Elodie | Taylor | Ciara |
| Gabriel | Victims of Wild Fires | |

Help us to speak words of encouragement and offer deeds of kindness to them. Bring us with them, into the unending joy of your kingdom. Amen.