

**Church of the Divine Love**

**FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT**

**MARCH 17, 2024 10:15 AM**

**HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II**

*Alleluias are omitted during Lent*

Prayer before worship – on insert

A PENITENTIAL ORDER

Processional Hymn **#495 – Hail! Thou once despised Jesus!**

Opening Acclamation for Lent page 351

The Decalogue page 350

The Confession page 353

THE WORD OF GOD

Kyrie page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Jeremiah 31:31-34**

Psalm 51: 1-13

Second Lesson: **Hebrews 5:5-10**

Gradual Hymn **#574 – Before thy throne, O God, we kneel**

Gospel: **John 12:20-33**

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze (printed on insert)

The Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, Form IV page 388

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn **#439 – What wondrous love is this**

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:

Eucharistic Prayer A page 361

Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal) page 367

Hymn during Consecration - printed on insert

The Lord's Prayer page 364

The Breaking of the Bread, Anthem & Prayer page 337

The Communion of the People

Communion Hymn – **One Bread One Body** (on insert)

Post Communion Prayer page 365

Prayer for Peace – on insert

Prayer of St. Francis page 833

Dismissal Hymn **#441 – In the cross of Christ I glory**

Dismissal

**Sermon Sunday March 17, 2024**

Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51: 1-13; Hebrews 5: 5-10; John 12:20-33.

**Sisters and brothers in Christ,**

The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also.

As much as we might like to see Jesus, Christianity is not a spectator sport. Seeing is not believing. Participation is believing. Essentially Jesus is saying, “If you want to see me, if you want to be with me, then die. Jesus invites us to trust death. That is hard work for most of us. We have been taught to fear, avoid, deny, and fight death in whatever form it might take – whether it be our physical death, the loss of a relationship, a dream, a way of thinking, our identity or reputation. Our efforts, however, to insulate ourselves from death ultimately insulate us from life. To the extent we are afraid to die we are also afraid to fully live. The place of death is also the place of birth. This is clearly demonstrated when the icon of the Nativity is compared with an icon of the Resurrection, namely that of the myrrh-bearing women at the tomb of Christ on the third day.

My soul is troubled. And what should I say — “Father, save me from this hour”? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Even Jesus is tempted to ask his heavenly Father to save him from this hour, from his death on the cross. To try and find another way to save our world. And we, too, are tempted to try and find a way that does not involve the cross. Like others, we want to see Jesus, but must it be on the cross? Wouldn't we rather see Jesus performing his great miracles – healing the sick, raising the dead, calming the storms, feeding the 5,000? Wouldn't we rather picture Jesus on a hillside teaching the crowds about God's love? Wouldn't we rather see Jesus only after he has been gloriously raised from the dead? Even we in the church are often tempted to try and have Christianity without the cross. And we preachers – I might add – are no exception. It is always tempting to preach good news without the cross. It is always tempting to offer a feel-good religion, with no acknowledgement of our sin and our need for the cross. How easy it would be to do just that!

But this is not the true gospel, the full story of what Jesus came to do for us. And not only that, but if we see Jesus on the cross, then we see Jesus everywhere. On humanity's darkest day, we see God's love shining most brightly. And so, on our darkest day, we see God's love shining brightly, too. No matter the pain or the suffering or the challenges we face, we can see Jesus right there in the midst of them, in the midst of us. Unless the grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Jesus knew that he would remain a single grain unless he died on the cross. To bear much fruit, he had to die on the cross. And if we think of Jesus' death on the cross as being the grain of wheat falling into the earth and dying, then what is the fruit that it bears? What is the fruit borne by the cross? Let me share three things that the cross does for us, that Jesus' death on the cross does for us, as a way of thinking about the fruit borne by his death.

The cross is where Jesus defeated sin, death, and the devil. It is where he defeated the ruler of this world, as Jesus calls Satan in this gospel reading. It is where he bore the judgment of the world. In other words, it is where that is where he accomplished our salvation. Without the cross, Jesus knows that his mission will have been in vain. As he says to his disciples in this passage: First, the cross frees us from sin, death and the devil, as Martin Luther liked to put it. It is not our hard work that frees us from these

things. We are captive to sin, after all, and cannot free ourselves. It is not Jesus' teaching that frees us from these things. His teaching shows us how to live once we are freed, but it doesn't free us. It is his death on the cross that frees us. As Jesus put it: Now is the judgment of the world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself. And to do it, he will go to the cross, to drive out the ruler of the world, and to free us. Unless he dies on the cross, the fruit of our freedom will never be borne in us. The freedom of the gospel was won on the cross. Not in the miracles, not in the teaching, not even in the resurrection. But on the cross.

But we might ask, what happens after Jesus sets us free from these things on the cross, after we are set free from sin, death, and the devil? In Martin Luther's Small Catechism, Luther answers this question in this way: He says that Jesus freed us from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, in order that we "may belong to him, live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in eternal righteousness. "So, the second thing the cross does for us is it brings us into Jesus' kingdom. We now belong to Jesus. And who better to belong to? We are either living in God's kingdom, or in Satan's. We are either serving God, or serving our sinful desires and the ruler of this world. Jesus died on the cross to free us from our sin, and to claim us for his own, to transfer us from one kingdom to another. From the kingdom of sin, death, and the devil, to the kingdom of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Forever. This, too, is what the cross did for us.

The grain of wheat that falls into the earth and dies produces much fruit. We are the fruit of that Holy Grain of Wheat, Christ. If we want to see Christ, to be with Christ, then we too must fall into the earth and die. That is our work of participation. The seed of God is in us. Given an intelligent and hard-working farmer, it will thrive and grow up to God, whose seed it is; and accordingly, its fruits will be God-nature. Pear seeds grow into pear trees, nut seeds into nut trees, and God-seed into God. So, die. Die with joy. Die with confidence. Die with thanksgiving. Die in order to live.

Sir, we wish to see Jesus. If this is your request, too, then look to the cross, the life-giving cross, on which was hung the Savior of the whole world. There, we will see Jesus. Today, by God's grace, you and I get to see Jesus. We have heard his words. We have worshiped, prayed, gathered in his name. We have seen Jesus once more. We have been set free from sin, death, and the devil. We have been reminded that we now belong to Jesus, and live in his kingdom. Attached to Jesus, we can now bear the fruit of the kingdom. Reminding all the world, through our words and our deeds, that we have a Savior, who has been lifted up, and seeks to draw all the world to himself. Thanks be to God. May he always be the one we desire. May we always wish to see Jesus. And we need to listen for the Voice. The Voice that is for our sake, not for his. The Voice speaks to us so that we might know how beloved we are. So that we might know how well pleased God is with us. Once we hear this voice and believe it, others will see Jesus, in all that we say and all that we do. **Amen.**

5 LENT                    10:15 AM                    HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II                    (also on zoom)  
COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS

MONDAY                    8:30 PM                    AA MEETING

WEDNESDAY                    7:00 PM                    AL-ANON MEETING

THURSDAY                    10AM-2PM                    THRIFT SHOP  
8:30 PM                    AA MEETING

SAURDAY                    10AM-2PM                    THRIFT SHOP

SUNDAY OF THE PASSION/PALM SUNDAY

10:15 AM                    LITURGY OF THE PALMS  
(in the parish hall with procession to the church)  
HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II                    (also on zoom)  
COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS

MAUNDAY THURSDAY    7:00 PM                    HOLY EUCHARIST , RITE II  
(stripping of the altar)

GOOD FRIDAY                    7:00 PM                    GOOD FRIDAY LITURGY  
(Communion from the reserved sacrament)

SATURDAY                    7:00 PM                    GREAT VIGIL OF EASTER

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Roe Prosser	Deb Giordano
Coffee	Jess Berbeck	Prossers

SUPPORT THE FOOD PANTRY – DROP-OFF IN THE KITCHEN

### PARISH PRAYER LIST

Loving God, comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind or spirit. Give them courage and hope in their troubles and bring them the joy of your salvation. Especially we remember before you:

Grace Schinella	Lourdes S.	Jess
Bob Curley	Beverly Noel	Art
Chris Dickson	Kate Jones	Deb P.
Michael Echevarria	John Rocco	Judy
Christopher	Warren	Kristen
Charlotte H.	Bernie Walther	Celeste
Jerry & Family	Phil Ryder	Carolyn
Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Del
Robert Hosey	Henry	Aidan
Sally & Roger	Sophia	Carol K.

Mary & Family	Ciara	Jan
Nathan Treadwell	Gladys Hadija	Vincent
Michael & Family	Evelyn	Mo
Jean Estinvil Quatorze	Matthew Treasure	

All people and countries suffering from violence, hatred and natural disasters.

The departed: Kathy

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

To add or make changes to prayer list during the week, email Janet Croft at [jmc220@optonline.net](mailto:jmc220@optonline.net).

Prayer before Worship

Almighty God, who pours out on all who desire it, the spirit of grace. Deliver us, when we draw near to you, from coldness of heart, and wanderings of mind, that with steadfast thoughts and kindled affections we may worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn to be sung during the consecration:

Father I adore you,

Lay my life before you,

How I love you.

Repeat twice with second verse starting with Jesus  
and third verse starting with Spirit.

Prayer for Peace

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn

but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: So  
mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that

all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince  
of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominions  
and glory, now and for ever. Amen



