

Church of the Divine Love

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

March 21, 2021 10:15 A.M.

Morning Prayer, Rite I

All pages refer to The Book of Common Prayer

Opening Hymn #441 – In the cross of Christ I glory vs 1-4

Opening Sentences for Lent page 38

Confession of Sin page 41

The Invitatory and Psalter page 42

Venite page 44

The First Lesson: **Jeremiah 1:31-34**

The Psalm Appointed: **Psalms 51:1-13**

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

Gradual Hymn #495 – Hail, thou once despised Jesus vs 1-3

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

The Sermon

Welcome and Announcements

Offertory Hymn #508 – Breathe on me, Breath of God

The Apostles Creed page 53

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Petitions and Thanksgivings of the People page 57

For Strength and Confidence page 459

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#47 – For Young Persons page 829

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Dismissal page 59

Dismissal Hymn #147 – Now let us all with one accord

Sermon Sunday March 21st, 2021

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

Dear people of God,

In the Old Testament reading, we see that God has chosen the Israelites as the chosen people. No doubt it was a privilege for the Israelites. They knew it but they failed to live as children of God because they disobeyed God. They failed like Adam and Eve, who disobeyed to fulfil their desire. Disobeying God's Word was the beginning of sin. The Israelites also sinned by not listening to God.

But God is the God of love, forgiveness, and mercy. Therefore, He forgives them all. He is always ready to forgive when His children repent and turn back to Him. When there is repentance, there is God's love, kindness, forgiveness, and mercy. When there is God's forgiveness there is reconciliation and there is a new beginning. Reconciliation with God is a new beginning. In the New Testament, we hear, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, s/he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." (2Cor.5:17).

We all are the chosen ones and new Israel and therefore, we must take this opportunity and live according to God's will. We should not disobey our God who loves us and allows us to be His children. We can realize God's expectation from the parable of Loving Father and the Prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). In the Psalm reading, King David realized the sins which he has done against God. He realized it, repented, prayed, and asked forgiveness. (Psalm 51). Many times, we have sinned by not listening to God. Like David we realize it but unless we repent and ask forgiveness with a broken heart like him, we are not forgiven. God's mercy is there for us always, but we need to obey God and do His will. In many ways, we have not listened to God. One thing we have neglected is God's command regarding caring for the creation. We have failed to follow the Word of God and have not heard what He expected from us regarding serving the creation. We have abused it and exploited it.

In Genesis 1:26-27, we see God created male and female in God's image and then He blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." Here God expected us the human being to be good stewards and to serve God's creation. But we have exploited it selfishly and exploited the whole creation. Now the whole creation is groaning and waiting for God's grace and mercy to be liberated. In Romans 8: 19, it is written – "For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. "Also, in Romans 8:22 says – "We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. "Therefore, until we feel guilty, we cannot repent. Due to our selfish nature, we are now facing a crisis like global warming, sea-level rise, loss of many species, climate change etc. We need to turn back and ask forgiveness for our deeds. We need to start a new and obey God's command, to care the creation the way God cares it and loves it.

From the epistle reading we learn that Jesus is our model who showed how to obey God the Father. He obeyed God and sacrificed His life for us. It is He who has opened the door for reconciliation with God and has given us a new life, a new beginning. He has restored the broken relationship which took place due to our selfish motives and desires. Jesus called us to reconcile, heal and restore. We all need to follow His steps of love, care and sacrifice for reconciliation and restoration. We must be ready to

sacrifice as Jesus showed us. It is right and our duty to repent and to be reconciled with God. Reconciling with God also needs reconciliation with His creation. Therefore, we need to confess our sins, negligence and we must acknowledge that we did and doing harm to God's creation and committing sin by not being good stewards of what God expected from us. It is high time for us to stop and turn back to care and serve the creation and to heal the wounds which we have done toward the creation.

In today's Gospel, we also hear Jesus speak about the cosmic framework against which we are to understand his passion, death, and Resurrection. Through his death and Resurrection, Jesus conquered Satan, the ruler of this world. In this way the world is judged, but the judgment is not condemnation. Instead, through Jesus' dying and rising, salvation is brought to the world. What is important here is to see that our true humanity is found not in ourselves but in Jesus. What needs to be driven out of us is our self-reliance and self-centeredness. We cannot be like a sulking child who refuses to come out of his room in defiance to his Father. That would only lead to a loss of freedom to live in the other parts of the home as part of the family. He has imprisoned himself in his own self-determined reality. It's only when this sinful rebellion is driven out of us that we can enter into the full home of the Father that Jesus has drawn us into. And even this is by God's grace. It is his glory to make us fully human, to live as children of the Father, just as Jesus lives as the Father's beloved Son. It is part of the mystery of life that we only enjoy that abundance by continually giving it away. Like Melchizedek, like Abraham and Sarah, we are blessed to be a blessing: to plant our lives like seeds in the earth and to share the fruits.

In today's Gospel, we see that Jesus showed the way to serve and reconcile. We must follow His example to sacrifice. We have ruined and harmed the creation to live our selfish lives. But we need to hear the voice of God so that we may live, and our generation may have a healthy and blessed life. We need to sacrifice and live the life God expects. Jesus sacrificed His life and therefore, we have received life. The same way He asked us to follow Him. Therefore, we must love, care, and serve the whole creation so that it can grow and bring fruits for us and our next generations.

At the end, for each of us, there is the final, unavoidable struggle to let go of our very life, with all the loss that is entailed in that. As we face of all these inevitable losses that are integral to life, we are strengthened by the words of Jesus in today's gospel, "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself." We trust and believe that, at the end of the day, after we have struggled through all our losses, the Lord will draw us to himself, and, when that happens, we will lack nothing. May this time of Lent renew within us the signs of resurrection: love and forgiveness. May our lives be filled with God's works because His Spirit lives within us. **AMEN!**

Easter flower memorial envelopes are enclosed. Please make checks payable to Church of Divine Love Altar Guild and return no later than Palm Sunday. Those at home can mail a check to the church att: Altar Guild and enclose your list of departed love ones.

5 LENT

10:15 AM MORNING PRAYER
(also on zoom)

11:15 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

SUNDAY OF THE PASSION: PALM SUNDAY

10:15 AM THE LITURGY OF THE PALMS
MORNING PRAYER, RITE I
(also on zoom)

SUPPORT THE FOOD DRIVE DROP-OFF IN THE KITCHEN

Prayer for Grace and Favor in the New Year:

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

Barbara Curran	Irene
Dina Palkowski	Margaret
Frances & Donna Mongelli	Bernie Walther
Nathan Treadwell	Jerry & Family
Girard Bishop	Kim
Chris Dickson	Rachael
Michael Echevarria	Del
Warren	Bill Conklin
Michael & Family	Anthony Paribello
Martinisi Family	Edward Lent
Lois Kessler	Kate Jones
Kathleen	
Children who are ill:	Christopher and his family
Franklin Tenesaca	Ciara Berbeck
Aidan	Gabriel