

Church of the Divine Love
SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
SEPTEMBER 17, 2023 10:15 AM
HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

Please observe silence

Prayer before worship – on insert

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn **#411 – O bless the Lord, my soul!**

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria (sung) page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Genesis 50:15-21**

Psalm 103:(1-7), 8-13

Second Lesson: **Romans 14:1-12**

Gradual Hymn **#1 – Father, we praise thee**

Gospel: **Matthew 18:21-35**

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

The Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, Form VI page 392

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn **#376 – Joyful, joyful, we adore thee**

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:	
Eucharistic Prayer A	page 361
Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal)	page 367
Hymn during Consecration – on insert	
The Lord’s Prayer	page 364
The Breaking of the Bread, Anthem & Prayer	page 337
The Communion of the People	
Communion Hymn #711 – Seek ye first	
Post Communion Prayer	page 365
Prayer for Peace – on insert	
Prayer of St. Francis	page 833
Dismissal Hymn – Song of Moses (on insert)	
Dismissal	

Sermon Sunday September 17, 2023

Genesis 50:15-21; Psalm 103:(1-7),8-13; Romans 14:1-12; Matthew 18:21-35.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

How often should I forgive? As many as seven times? Jesus answered Peter, “Not seven times, but I tell you, seventy-seven times.”

Forgiveness, for Jesus, is not a quantifiable event. It is a quality; a way of being, a way of living, a way of loving, a way of relating, a way of thinking and seeing. It is nothing less than the way of Christ. If we are to follow Christ then it must become our way as well. “Not seven times, but I tell you, seventy-seven times.

Today we stand at a difficult, seemingly impossible, place. We stand at the intersection of the 22nd anniversary of the September 11 tragedy and today’s gospel. The memories, the images, the anger, the fear, the pain and losses all intersect with Jesus’s teaching on forgiveness. Both are real. Both are true. The deeper truth, however, is that we would still be standing at the same intersection even if September 11 had never occurred. We stand at that place every day of our life. Look at the history of the world and you will see the Holocaust, the Killing Fields of Cambodia, the genocides in Bosnia and Rwanda, racial

discrimination, economic oppression, war in Ukraine. Look at your own lives and you will find broken promises, hurt feelings, betrayals, harsh words, physical and emotional wounds. Every one of us could tell stories of being hurt or victimized by another. Beneath the pain, the wounds, the losses, and the memories lies the question of forgiveness.

Further, Jesus has shown us what he means by forgiveness. Forgiveness means releasing the debt. The debt was no longer held against that person. Forgiveness is far more than saying, I forgive you. Forgiveness means that we no longer hold the person accountable for what they have done against us. The debt is released. We will not hold that debt over them. Friends, every time we turn to the Lord for forgiveness, he never says no. Every time we turn to the Lord for forgiveness, he forgives. In the same way, every time someone asks us for patience, apologizes for what they did, asks for forgiveness, asks for mercy, or tries to restore the debt, we must accept it just like the Lord does for us. We do not get the right to tell someone that we can never forgive them. We do not get the right to tell someone that what they did was unforgivable. If we do, then the Lord says he will not forgive our debts either. Can you imagine the horror of hearing our Lord tell us that what we did is unforgivable? Can you imagine the Lord telling us that he just doesn't think he can forgive what we did? If we do not want that, then we cannot do that to others who ask us for mercy and patience. How many times must we forgive? Don't even count because God is not counting your sins against you. In verse 30 the man refused to show patience and was judged. Do not refuse forgiveness to those who desire it. Do not refuse patience to those who seek it. Do not refuse reconciliation to those who ask for it. Do not refuse mercy to those who want it.

God's forgiveness and human forgiveness are integrally related. That is more than apparent in today's parable. The king forgives his slave an extraordinary amount. Ten thousand talents are about 3000 years of work at the ordinary daily wage. It seems there is no debt too large to be forgiven. This man, this debtor, was forgiven. That's what the kingdom of heaven is like. That's how our God is. This slave, however, refused to forgive his fellow slave 100 denarii, about three months of work at the ordinary daily wage. Too often that's what our world is like. Frequently, it is how we are. In that refusal the forgiven slave lost his own forgiveness. This should not be news to us. We know it well. We acknowledge and pray it every Sunday and I'll bet most of you pray it every day. "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." We pray those words with ease and familiarity but do we live our prayer? Do our actions support our request? "Not seven times, but I tell you, seventy-seven times."

That's a lot of forgiveness but the pain of the world, our nation, and individuals is great. We need to forgive as much, maybe more, for ourselves as for the one we forgive. Forgiving those who trespass against us is the salve that begins to heal our wounds. It may not change the one who hurt you but I promise you this. Your life will be more alive, more grace-filled, more whole, more God-like for having forgiven another. Forgiveness creates space for new life. Forgiveness is an act of hopefulness and resurrection for the one who forgives. It is the healing of our soul and life. Forgiveness takes us out of darkness into light, from death to life. It disentangles us from the evil of another. It is the refusal to let

our future be determined by the past. It is the letting go of the thoughts, the hatred, the fear that fill us so that we might live and love again.

Forgiveness does not originate in us. It begins with God. That's what the slave who refused to forgive didn't understand. It was not about him. It's about God. We do not choose to forgive. We only choose to share the forgiveness we have already received. Then we chose again, and then again, and then yet again. For most of us forgiveness is a process that we live into. Sometimes, however, we just can't. The pain is too much, the wound too raw, the memories too real. On those days we chose to want to forgive. Somedays we chose to want to forgive. Then there are those days that all we can do is choose to want to forgive. But we choose because that's the choice Christ made. How many times must we choose to forgive? Tell me this. How many times have you been hurt and suffered by the actions or words of another? How many times has anger or fear controlled you? How many times has the thought of revenge filled you? How many times have you shuddered at the sight, the name, or the memory of another? How many times have you replayed in your head the argument with another? That's how many times you choose. With each choosing we move a step closer to forgiveness. Then one day, God willing, we will meet, victims and perpetrators, as happy thieves in the Paradise of God, the Father of us all. "Not seven times, but I tell you, seventy-seven times."

And lest we forget; the greatest act of terrorism the world has ever known was against the Son of God, when they crucified Him on an old rugged Cross, yet for our sake, God forgave us. God fought the weapons of our hate and violence with the power of His love and forgiveness. God did not win the war on the terrorism of sin with military might, bombs and bullets, or a legion of angels, but through the blood sacrifice of His Son. God liberated us from the bondage of violence in offering us His forgiveness. "Father forgives them, for they know not what they do." Forgiveness is the holy way of the Cross. And as we follow the teachings of Jesus to forgive others as we have been forgiven, we release the power of God's love and forgiveness into a world in deep need of healing. There are those who suffer from the emotional and mental wounds of a wrong done to them, or possibly something they've done to another person, but the wounds will never heal without forgiving others as well as forgiving ourselves. Forgiveness heals us and it heals others. **Amen.**

16 PENTECOST	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II	(also o zoom)
		PARISH PICNIC FOLLOWS	
MONDAY	8:30 PM	AA MEETING	
WEDNESDAY	7:00 PM	AL-ANON	
THURSDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP	
	8:30 PM	AA MEETING	

SATURDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP	
17 PENTECOST	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II	(also on zoom)
		COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS	

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Anthony Giordano	Deb Giordano
Coffee Hour	Parish Picnic	Prossers

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.	Kaylee
Bob Curley	Arlene Goodenough	Art
Chris Dickson	Kate Jones	Deb P.
Michael Echevarria	John Rocco	Bethany
Joan Blan	Warren	Kristin
Charlotte H.	Bernie Walther	Anthony
Mo (Rachael)	Phil Ryder	Carolyn
Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Del
Robert Hosey	Robert Sweat	Aidan
Sally & Roger	Sophia	Carol K.
Mary & Family	Christopher	Amy

Nathan Treadwell

Vincent

Judy

Michael & Family

Celeste

Ciara

Donna Amundsen

Margaret G. and Baby

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

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

The departed: Dennis

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