

Church of the Divine Love

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PROPER 21

SEPTEMBER 25, 2022

10:15 A.M.

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

Please observe silence

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn #

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Amos 6:1a, 4-7**

Psalm 146

Second Lesson: **1 Timothy 6:6-19**

Gradual Hymn -#

Gospel: **Luke 16:19-31**

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze

Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, FormIV page 388

The Confession of Sin page 360

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn #

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:

Eucharistic Prayer C	page 369
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 – #	
Post Communion Prayer	page 365
Prayer for Peace – on insert	
Prayer of St. Francis	page 833
Dismissal Hymn –#	
Dismissal	

Sermon Sunday September 25, 2022

Amos 6:1a,4-7; Psalm 146; 1 Timothy 6:1-19; Luke 16:19-31

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

Last week I went to a gas station, as I pulled in there was a man under a tree in the corner of the parking lot sitting on a rolled up sleeping bag. He held a sign. It said, "Vet. Homeless and hungry. Will you help? God bless you." Cars and trucks drove right past him without stopping. So, did I. After all, I don't know him. I don't know what he needs or if his needs are legitimate. I don't know why he is in the situation he claims or if it's even true. Besides all that, I was in a hurry to go eat lunch and finish my sermon.

You know how sometimes a thought sort of just comes to you? You didn't think it on purpose. You don't want to keep thinking it, but it won't go away. Well, as I was filling the truck with gas, I started thinking about today's gospel. Then I began to wonder and even worry just a bit. Is that Lazarus? Am I the rich man? Will he one day be comforted in the bosom of Abraham while I am in torment? I don't really think that's what this parable is saying but, just in case, I stopped and gave him a twenty-dollar and said, "Here, you can go buy something to eat."

So, does that reserve me a place on Abraham's lap next to this guy or will I see him from afar, separated by a chasm neither one of us can cross? Was twenty dollars enough or should it have been thirty? Should I have invited him to lunch? Paid for a night in a hotel? Offered him a room in my house? Those are the kind of questions that arise when we interpret parables literally, turning them into a story of historical fact. When we do that, the questions are usually endless and unanswerable. Neither can we, however, treat parables as merely metaphor or symbolism that have no real-life implications for how we live. So, what about today's parable? What is it saying to us and what is it not saying to us?

First, God is concerned about the poor and expects us to also be concerned. That is clear throughout scripture in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. We reveal God's presence in our lives by sharing God's concerns and by acting as God acts. That does not mean, however, that the poor are our ticket into heaven. We do not buy our way to heaven. We help the poor, feed the hungry, house the homeless, care for the sick, visit prisoners, and work for justice because that's simply who and how God's people are to be. The question isn't what's in it for me but what's in it for them. What does our Christianity, our faith, our experience of Jesus Christ offer them?

Second, there is a relationship between this life and the next life. The choices we make, the words we speak, and the actions we take in this life have consequences in the next life. Now don't push that too far with this story. Today's gospel is not a systematic explanation or theological analysis of heaven and hell. The story is not a judgment that rich people go to hell and poor people go to heaven. This story isn't so much about our future but about our present lives. It's about how we live here and now. It's a reminder that our lives are connected and intertwined in this world and in the next world.

At some point in our lives, we have probably all been both the rich man and Lazarus. We can all name times when life has been good, full, and easy. Likewise, we can name times when it has simply left us destitute, broken, and in sorrow and suffering. I don't think this parable is asking us to make judgments about who is the rich man and who is Lazarus. Instead, it is asking us to acknowledge and deal with the gates and chasms that separate us from each other. Throughout this parable chasms are the one constant. From beginning to end the parable is full of divisions and separations. Remember the gate at the beginning? On one side of the gate lies Lazarus, dressed in sores and dog spit, hungry, and unable to get up and walk. On the other side the rich man, dressed in fine linen and purple, sits at his table and feasts every day. Remember the chasm at the end? On one side of the chasm Lazarus sits comforted in the bosom of Abraham. On the other side the rich man stands tormented in the flames of Hades.

The gate and the chasm are the same thing. The chasm that separates Lazarus and the rich man in the next world is simply a manifestation of the gate that separated them in this world. The rich man carried it with him into the next world. It was a part of him. The gate that separates and divides us in this world is not a condition of circumstances or categories: rich or poor, black, or white, Muslim, or Christian, or any other category you might add to this list. That gate is a condition of the human heart. The gate that becomes a chasm always exists within us before it exists between us. That means we must each examine our own heart to find the gates that separate us from ourselves, our neighbors, our enemies, those we love, and ultimately God. What are those gates for you? For me? For this parish? For the United States of America? What gates do we live with? Fear, anger, greed, pride, prejudice, loneliness, sorrow, addiction, busyness, indifference, apathy, hurt, resentment, envy, cynicism. You get the idea. There's a lot of possibilities for the gates within us. We all have them. That's not how we are intended to live. That's certainly not how Jesus lived. Gates destroy relationships. They unmake God's creation.

I don't know what gates you carry within you, but I know this. Every time we love our neighbor as ourselves, every time we love our enemies, every time we see and treat one another as created in the image and likeness of God, gates are opened, and chasms are filled. I can't give you detailed instructions on how to do those things. It is something we must each live our way into. It's a choice set before us every day. It can happen in our marriages and families, at work and school, on the corner of parking lots, and in our prayers for the world. It can happen in the most intimate of relationships, or with strangers, and even with our enemies. It is not easy work but it possible. Jesus demonstrated that in his life, death, and resurrection. Gates were opened and chasms were filled. Christ's love, mercy, grace, and presence make it possible for us to open our gates and insure they do not become chasms.

Let your gates be opened and your chasms filled. This is our work and the salvation of the world. It's what the kingdom of God looks like. We already have everything we need. That was Abraham's point in not sending Lazarus to the rich man's brothers. Abraham was not denying them anything. Nothing was lacking. They already had everything they needed. The word of God that opens gates and fills chasms is the same word of God proclaimed by Moses and the prophets, the very same word embodied in the person of Jesus Christ. He is the image of our opened gates and our filled chasms, the image of who we most truly are and who we are to become.

We have the power to build gates and walls. We have the power to dig chasms. Through our neglect, our participation in unjust systems. Through turning a blind eye to the needs of others and a deaf ear to the demands of our faith. But there is another way. We also have the power to build bridges. To tear down the things that separate us and build ramps over the gaps. All we have to do is begin to pay attention. To see the needs around us. To care for those outside our door. We do not have to wait until the afterlife to bridge the great divide that exists between us and others. For in the end, this story is not about what will happen to us when we die after all. It is, instead, a story about how we are to live right now. **Amen!**

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

MONDAY	8:00 AM	AA MEETING
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WEDNESDAY	7:00 PM	AL-ANON MEETING
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THURSDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP
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	8:00 PM	AA MEETING
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SATURDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP
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17 PENTECOST	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II	(also on zoom)
		COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS	

SUPPORT THE FOOD DRIVE – DROP OFF IN THE KITCHEN

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Deb Giordano	Roe Prosser
Coffee Hour	Janet Croft	Nolans

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:

Grace Schinella	Harriet Capers	Bob Curley
John Mulligan	Arlene Goodenough	Celeste
Chris Dickson	Kate Jones	Deb P.
Michael Echevarria	John Rocco	Robert Sweat
Barbara Stinson	Michael & Family	Warren
Charlotte H.	Bernie Walther	Anthony
Mo (Rachael)	Bill Conklin Sr.	Laura
Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Taylor
Ciara	Gabriel	Aidan
Elodie	Sophia	Carol K.
People of Haiti	Christopher & Family	Julia
Maggie & Family	People of Ukraine	Tim
Nathan Treadwell	Bob Lazevnick	Art
Bill Masoeust	Carolyn	Del

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

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

