

Church of the divine Love
SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY
FEBRUARY 12, 2023 10:15 AM
HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

THE WORD OF GOD

Prayer for the New Year – on insert

Processional Hymn #

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Deuteronomy 30:15-20**

Psalm 119:1-8

Second Lesson: **1 Corinthians 3:1-9**

Gradual Hymn #

Gospel: **Matthew 5:21-37**

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze

Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, FormVI page 392

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn #

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:

Eucharistic Prayer D	page 372
Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal)	page 373
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	(extra verse on facing page)

Sermon Sunday February 12, 2023

Deuteronomy 30:15-30; Psalm 119:1-8; 1 Corinthians 3:1-9; Matthew 5:21-37.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

You have heard it said, the Old Testament is a book of law and judgment. You have heard it said, the New Testament is a book of grace and love. But I say to you, welcome to today's gospel! Today's gospel won't let us make those simple and inaccurate distinctions. Jesus' words show continuity and consistency between the Old and the New Testaments, not separation and opposition. According to Jesus it's not just for murder that we will be held liable but also for anger, insult, and name-calling. By his definition adultery is not solely determined by physical relationships but by the thoughts, desires, and fantasies within us. In Jesus' eyes divorce might sometimes be legal but there are always lasting consequences. For Jesus honesty and truth-telling are not to be governed by an oath but by every word we speak.

If we thought Jesus would cut us some slack on the law we need to think again. He seems to be doing just the opposite. Jesus does not reject the law. Far from it; he intensifies it. He does not change the law, he interiorizes it. That means that life is lived from the inside out and that the quality of our relationships arises from and is determined more by what is going on within us than by what is going on around or outside us. Jesus' intensifying and interiorizing of the law means that we cannot live as one person on the inside and another on the outside. It's a remedy to living a dividend and fragmented life. To the degree we are divided within ourselves, one person on the inside and another on the outside, we will be separated from God and each other.

We make the choice between life and death in so many ways every day of our lives. We make that choice in the ways we choose to see and look at ourselves and others. It's in our thoughts. It's in the words we speak as well as the things we have done and left undone. So, what if we intentionally chose life in every decision we made? What if choosing life was at the center of our thoughts, the words we speak, and the things we do? How might that change your life, your relationships, your world? I think that's what Jesus is getting at in today's gospel. Jesus knows that life isn't to be codified and that choices are more than a cost benefit analysis, more than getting what we desire, and more than simply following the rules. Now, I am not suggesting that we throw out the rules as if they don't matter. Jesus did not do that. Rather, he fulfilled the law. He recognized and revealed the law to be about life.

The law was never intended to divide people into categories of good or bad, right or wrong, law abider or law breaker. It was to point the way to life. That's what Jesus does. That's why he could say that he came not to destroy but to fulfill the law. Jesus did not come to make us good but to make us alive. He set us free to make choices that support, sustain, grow, and nurture life for ourselves and one another. Jesus is more interested in our lives and relationships being put back together, made whole, than he is in superficial compliance with the rules. I think that is why he intensifies and interiorizes the law. I think that is also why he is so critical of the scribes and Pharisees. It's why, immediately before today's gospel, he says that unless our righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, we will never enter the kingdom of heaven. The law was never intended to be the goal. It was always intended to be a means of establishing, nurturing, and protecting relationships.

We can too easily forget that the law is more about relationships than it is rules. When that happens, we're in grave danger of keeping the rules and losing the relationship. If we are to be faithful to Christ then we must take an honest look within ourselves and answer some hard questions. In what ways is our life divided and fragmented? Are we living as one person on the inside and another on the outside? Have we kept the rules but lost the relationship? Most of us have probably never murdered another person. But have our anger, insults, or name-calling left another dead to us so that they are just no longer a part of our world? We may not be in an adulterous affair but have our thoughts, fantasies, or the way we see and perceive another objectified and depersonalized another? This is about more than sexuality. It happens every time we dehumanize and strip another of life making them a thing to be used. Maybe we've never been divorced or if we have there were good reasons and it was necessary, because sometimes that is the reality, but there's a deeper question. Have we treated another as disposable, here today gone tomorrow, as if we had no need of them and they had no inherent value?

Perhaps that's a part of what intensifying and interiorizing the law looks like. Jesus is not trying to make things harder, to trap us, condemn us, or judge us but to make us whole, to put our lives and relationships back together so that our yes really is yes and our no really is no. Obedience to the law is more than just keeping the rules. It is, ultimately, keeping the relationship. That is a choice each one of us makes every moment of every day. That choice comes from deep within us. It is the choice between life and death. Isn't that what we heard in the reading from Deuteronomy? Before each person are life and death, and whichever one chooses will be given.

The good news is that God gives us what we choose. The bad news is that God gives us what we choose. The choice is life or death; physical, emotional, and spiritual. Let's not think this is only about our life or our death. That's just another symptom that our life is divided and fragmented. We're all in this together. None of us ever really lives an individual life isolated from others. We're not choosing life or

death only for ourselves but for each other, for our neighbors, for our enemies, for the stranger on the street, and for the anonymous face across the world. Whichever one chooses will be given. That's why this intensifying and interiorizing of the law is so important and necessary. It is Jesus' way of saying, Choose life. Choose life. Choose life. If that is what Jesus asks of us it is only because that is how he and his Father are. They always choose life. They always keep the relationship.

Every time we choose life, every time we keep the relationship, we are participating in the life of God. We are exhibiting the divine attributes. We are making God present in this world through our life and humanity. The reason we can do this with each other is because God first does it with us.

The next person we meet will set before us a choice between life and death. It may be at lunch, in our family, at work, at school, running our errands, or any one of thousand other places. Regardless, the choice will be there. Let's not leave here today not knowing what we will choose. The choice does not depend on the person or the circumstances. It depends on us. Let's choose life, let's keep the relationship. Let's not stop choosing and keeping so that wherever we go, whoever we are with, whatever we are doing there is nothing but life, there is only life, there is nothing but God, there is only God. **Amen!**

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

ASH WEDNESDAY – FEBRUARY 22ND

7:00 PM

HOLY EUCHARIST AND IMPOSITION OF ASHES

SUPPORT THE FOOD PANTRY – DROP OFF IN THE KITCHEN

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	Lourdes S.	Bob Curley
John Mulligan	Arlene Goodenough	Celeste
Chris Dickson	Kate Jones	Deb P.
Michael Echevarria	John Rocco	Gabriel
Barbara Stinson	Michael & Family	Warren
Charlotte H.	Bernie Walther	Anthony
Mo (Rachael)	Bill Conklin Sr.	Carolyn
Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Del
Ciara	Robert Sweat	Aidan
Sally & Roger	Sophia	Carol K.
People of Haiti	Christopher & Family	Julia
Mary & Family	People of Ukraine	Tim
Nathan Treadwell	Vincent	Art
Margaret	Kaylee	Judy

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: Harriet Capers

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