

Church of the Divine Love

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

MARCH 27, 2022

10:15 AM

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

Please observe silence Alleluias are omitted during Lent

A PENITENTIAL ORDER

Processional Hymn #690 – **Guide me, O thou great Jehovah**

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: **Joshua 5:9-12**

Psalm 32

Second Lesson: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Gradual Hymn #693, vs. 1-3 – **Just as I am**

Gospel: **Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32**

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze

Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, Form IV page 388

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

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

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:

Eucharistic Prayer B page 367

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 – **#686 – Come, thou fount of every blessing**

Post Communion Prayer page 365

Prayer for Peace – on insert

Prayer of St. Francis page 833

Dismissal Hymn **#343 – Shepherd of souls, refresh and bless**

Dismissal

Sermon Sunday March 27, 2022

Joshua 5: 9-12; Psalm 32; 2 Corinthians 5: 16-21; Luke 15: 1-3,11b-32

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

I wonder if the younger son was surprised when his father gave him his inheritance. This is not like asking for an advance on allowance. The son's request has real significance. The son is saying to his father, "You are dead to me. I don't need you. I just want your stuff." The son has separated himself from his father. Their relationship is now different.

The son has rejected and dishonored not only his father but the entire village. He has hurt, shamed, and disowned them. Every resident of the village now stands as a reason the son cannot return. If he did return, he would be met with anger. He would be in danger. Everyone – the son, his brother, the slaves, and hired-hands, and all the villagers – thought the son was on a one-way trip. Everyone, that is, except the father.

The prodigal son himself is well known to us all. Restless, impatient for his future happiness, he comes and demands from the father that which he thought was rightfully his. He took his money and journeyed to a far country where he wastes it. He wastes the money, wastes his life, and finally ended up doing the

most indignant task that a Jew could do, the feeding of swine. It was then that Jesus says that he came to himself. He arises from his situation and goes back to the father to ask to be a servant in his household. And even as he was a long distance away the father saw him and ran out with outstretched arms to greet him. As the story concludes we have the makings of a grand homecoming party.

Throughout all this the father is silent. He does not ask questions and why the son is leaving or where he is going. He does not argue or get angry. He does not ground his son or put him on restriction. He simply divided his property between the two sons. For so long we have heard and understood this story as one about sin. We hold the two sons up as examples. The younger son, the bad son, runs away and does even worse things. The older son, the good son, was always at home. He never disobeyed. The implication is obvious. Be the obedient slave-like child to your heavenly father. The difficulty is that the whole good and bad dichotomy rarely transforms lives. Love, however, can and does transform lives.

Be a good obedient child. Is that really all this story says? Is this story really even about the sons? Maybe this story is more about the father than it is about the sons. Maybe this story is about love and grace more than it is about sin. Luke introduces the story by saying, "There was a man." From the beginning the focus is on the father. Although we do hear about the son's journey, it is always in relation to the father. The father is the one who even made it possible for the son to leave. To the extent that this is about the sons it is primarily about the sons as recipients of the father's love.

The father's love is so strong and so big that it does not possess the other; but is willing to let go. His love is so strong and so big that it makes no demands but is willing to wait patiently. It is a love that forgives and welcomes home. His love will not rescue us out of or stop us from going to the distant country. Instead, it redeems the time spent and the life lived in that place. That is good news for those of us who travel to the distant country; and we all go there at some point. Some write notes and run away from home, some ask for and squander their inheritance, and some, like the older son, fume in silent resentment. Sorrow, grief, and loss take some to the distant country while fear, shame, embarrassment take others there. Some will travel to the distant country by way of addictions and self-destructive behavior. For others the journey of guilt, self-condemnation, or even self-hated ends in the distant country.

However, we get there, the distant country is that place in which we are lost, dead, and hungry. In the distant country we are lost to ourselves, empty of meaning, and starving for life, love, and hope. We are just not ourselves in the distant country, at least not our true selves. Life stinks in the distant country. That is the grace of the distant country. While we may go there, we eventually come to ourselves and discover that it is not a place we want to stay. Sometimes we are in a situation where we need to talk to ourselves and then to go to our source, our father, because in the father's house no more stress, no more blood pressure, no more worry, but we have access to everything. In the father's house we can enjoy our life. Access is greater than ownership, no limit, we have enough, this is why it is good to stay in the presence of God.

Regardless of why we go there, the things we have done there, or the amount of time spent in the distant country we can always go home. If we go home, we will have to face the villagers. We will meet all those many voices that live within us. You don't really think you could go home do you? After what you have done? They don't want you there. You are covered in pig stink. They won't take you back. You aren't worthy. You never were. The only way home, it seems, is to deny that we are our father's

children. I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands."

The father, however, knows that love is the real way home. That is why the father runs to meet his son. He is there to protect him from the villagers, to see him safely home. The father stands between his son and the villagers. The best robe. Sandals. A ring. The banquet. Over and over the father recommits himself to this runaway-come-home.

Where are you? Leaving home? The father offers freedom, and you are loved. In the pig pens of life? The father waits patiently, and you are loved. Coming home? The father will protect you and you are loved. Finally, home? The father has prepared you a banquet and you are loved. It matters not where we are in this journey. The father always trusts his love for his children more than he does the words, decisions, and actions of his children. How can we do anything less? God's plans for you continue to be exceedingly and abundantly above all that you could ask or think. Find rest in the good news that you are seen and known by the One who made us all. **In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen.**

Masks optional with social distance seating

Easter flower memorial envelopes are at the back of the Church.

Please clearly print the names of your loved ones you wish to memorialize and return by April 10th.

Make checks payable to: The Church of the Divine Love Altar Guild.

SUNDAY – 4 LENT	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II	(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 – 5 LENT 10:15 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II (also on zoom)

SUPPORT THE FOOD DRIVE – 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:

Carol K.	Harriet Capers	Bob Curley
Jean C.	Arlene Goodenough	Celeste
Chris Dickson	Kate Jones	Grace Schinella
Michael Echevarria	John Rocco	Robert Sweat
Martinisi Family	Michael & Family	Warren
Charlotte H.	Bernie Walther	Sylvia
Mo (Rachael)	Bill Conklin Sr.	Laura
Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Taylor
Ciara	Gabriel	Aidan
Elodie	Del	Julia
People of Haiti	Chrissy Neville	Tim
Theresa K.	Amy E.	Dorothy

Nathan Treadwell

Christopher & Family

Girard Bishop

People of Ukraine

Help us to 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

