

Church of the Divine Love
SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – PROPER 10
JULY 16, 2023 9:00 A.M.
HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

Please observe silence

Prayer before worship – on insert

THE WORD OF GOD

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

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria (sung) page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Isaiah 55:10-13**

Psalm 65: (1-8), 9-14

Second Lesson: **Romans 8:1-11**

Gradual Hymn **#593 -Lord, make us servants of your peace**

Gospel: **Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23**

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

The Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, Form IV page 388

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn – **One Bread One Body (on insert)**

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:	
Eucharistic Prayer B	page 367
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 #304 – I come with joy to meet my Lord	
Post Communion Prayer	page 365
Prayer for Peace – on insert	
Prayer of St. Francis	page 833
Dismissal Hymn – Blessed Assurance (on insert)	
Dismissal	

Sermon Sunday July 16, 2023

Isaiah 55:10-13; Psalm 65:1-8,9-14; Romans 8:1-11; Matthew 13:1-9,18-23.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

Who is the Sower? God? Yes. Jesus? Yes. Those are the usual answers and they certainly are not wrong. God is always sowing God’s life in ours. We are created in the image of God and according to God’s likeness. The kingdom of God is within you St. Luke tells us (Luke 17:21). In today’s epistle St. Paul says, “The Spirit of God dwells in you” (Romans 8:9, 11). In a few minutes we will hear Jesus’ words, “Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you,” and “Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.” Our prayers are often a request or desire for the divine Sower to spread some seed. Our thanksgivings are a recognition of God’s sowing in our lives.

But are the usual answers the only answers? There’s nothing wrong with the usual answers until they become the only answers or the default answers. I am not denying or minimizing God and Jesus as Sowers in our lives and world. I simply want to expand and enlarge the possibilities, to give the holy

words of scripture every chance to take root in our lives, to bloom in new ways, and to grow into something we never before imagined or thought possible. So, here's what I am wondering. Might you and I be Sowers of seed? When we hear or read this parable, we are pretty quick to judge ourselves or others as one of the four types of ground: the beaten path, the rocky ground, thorny terrain, or good soil. But have you ever thought of yourself as the Sower in today's parable?

Have you ever had someone show up at just the right time and say or do exactly what you needed and you knew it was not calculated, there was no end game for him or her? They were sowing seeds. They were simply being themselves. Whatever they did or said they could not do or say otherwise. They seeded your life because they were a Sower. By the same token you have probably had the experience of someone saying to you, you remember when you said or did? How did you know? That is exactly what I needed. And you have no recollection of that event. You didn't plan it or intend it. You were just sowing the seeds of your life. It's not so much what you did or said but who you were. You were a Sower to that person. All our lives we are sowing seeds, and often we don't even know it. The Sower sows because that's who she or he is. His or her being and doing reflect each other. We sow because we are Sowers. We are Sowers because we sow. Sowing is simply our way of being and living, the way we engage the world and relate to others. It is the practice that shapes and forms who we are becoming. The seeds we sow reflect what is going on within us and who we are. We can only sow seeds that were first sown and cultivated within us. Sowing is an interior practice before it is ever an exterior action.

Jesus sows in us the word of the kingdom. That word is love, peace, hope, joy, forgiveness, mercy, compassion, beauty, wisdom, presence, encouragement, perseverance, courage, gentleness, wholeness, healing, reconciliation, integrity, authenticity. And the list goes on and on. Those are the seeds Jesus sows within us, seeds that we are to cultivate within ourselves and sow in our relationships and the world. They are the kind of things that once we experience them, we cannot keep them to ourselves. They sprout and grow within us, and we seed the world. If those seeds are about an interior quality so is the soil on which they fall. The four types of ground described in today's parable are descriptive of our lives and the lives of others. No one is just one kind of ground. All four are aspects of ourselves, interior landscapes. I have known times when it felt like my life was nothing more than getting from Point A to Point B and it took all I had to do that. There was no room, time, or energy for anything else. Nothing was growing or flowering. The seeds of opportunity were lost, ignored, unrecognized, or snatched away. Do you know what that's like? Have you ever lived life on the path?

Sometimes life can feel pretty rocky. Fear, envy, anger, or hard heartedness pepper the soil of our lives. New life cannot take root. There's no depth. We live at the surface. This is telling us something. Our land needs to be cleared. There is work to be done. What rocks fill the soil of your life? Other times the thorns of guilt, shame, or regret choke out the possibilities of something new. Our life is constricted, strangled by the past. We are pricked by the barbs of our own inconsistencies and contradictions. What might need to be weeded from the garden of your life? And then there are those times when our life is

fertile, open, receptive, rich in nutrients, flowering, flourishing, and fruitful. The seeds within us yield “in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

We need to be careful that we do not make a conclusion or final judgment about the ground in which we sow, whether in our own lives or the lives of others. Jesus’ description of the four grounds is not intended to shame or condemn but to awaken us. All four types of ground need attention and care whether it be plowing to a new depth, clearing the land, weeding, watering, or fertilizing. I don’t know what the land of your life needs but I will bet you do. And the truth is all four describe parts of ourselves. The condition of the soil does not, however, stop the Sower. He does not seed only the good soil. She does not withhold seed from the thorny or rocky ground. Even the walked upon path is seeded. And that makes no sense. At least not for those who want to calculate and quantify life. That’s not the way of the Sower, however.

The Sower sows with reckless and indiscriminate generosity. The Sower sows here, there, and everywhere without regard to where the seed might land or the quality or type of ground on which it falls. The Sower sows not because of who or what the ground is but because of who the Sower is. Where and with whom do we sow? In what ways have we withheld seed because we deemed the ground unworthy? What would it take for us to be as generous as the Sower in today’s gospel? The Sower does not worry about the harvest or how much it will yield. That he or she sows anywhere and everywhere. He or she simply sows. This isn’t the way of our culture. It’s not what most of us have been taught or come to believe. We want a return on our investment. We want to make good use of our time and effort. We strive for efficiency and success. We don’t want to waste resources or spend ourselves on a hopeless cause. We measure productivity, keep score, and seek to maximize profits. That’s not how the Sower into today’s parable lives. Again, the Sower sows not because of an expected harvest but because of who the Sower is. How would your life be different if you stopped measuring and keeping score?

Finally, the Sower is not concerned about whether there is or will be enough seed. Life, creation, the world, the universe, whatever we might call this existence is a divine seed market. There is more than enough. And the deepest and most gracious response to there being enough is to sow with generosity. The lives of others need a Sower with seeds of new life. Our country needs a Sower with seeds of new life. The world needs a Sower with seeds of new life. They’re waiting for you. You are that Sower and your hopes carry those seeds of new life. If our lives, our country, our world are going to change, to grow and flourish, to become something new, it will be because, and only because, a Sower went out to sow.
Amen.

7 PENTECOST 9:00 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II (also on zoom)

MONDAY 8:30 PM AA MEETING

WEDNESDAY 7:00 PM AL-ANON MEETING

THURSDAY 10AM-2PM THRIFT SHOP
8:30 PM AA MEETING

SATURDAY 10AM-2PM THRIFT SHOP

8 PENTECOST 9:00 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II (also on zoom)

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Anthony Giordano	Deb Giordano

SUPPORT THE FOOD PANTRY – DROP-OFF IN THE KITCHEN

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
Michael & Family	Warren	Dennis
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
Celeste	Ciara	

All people and countries suffering from violence and hatred.

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: Barbara Stinson

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

