

Church of the Divine Love

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

OCTOBER 1, 2023 10:15 AM

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

Prayer before worship – on insert

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn **#686 – Come, thou font of every blessing**

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria (sung) page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Ezekiel: 18:1-4, 25-32**

Psalm 25:1-8

Second Lesson: **Philippians 2:1-13**

Gradual Hymn **#492 – Sing, ye faithful, sing with gladness**

Gospel: **Matthew 21:23-32**

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze

The Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, Form VI page 392

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

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

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 #439 – <b>What wonderful love is this</b>	
Post Communion Prayer	page 365
Prayer for Peace – on insert	
Prayer of St. Francis	page 833
Dismissal Hymn – <b>Lord I Lift Your Name on High</b> (on insert)	
Dismissal	

### **Sermon Sunday October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023**

Ezekiel 18:1-4,25-32; Psalm 25:1-8; Philippians 2:1-13; Matthew 21:23-32.

#### **Sisters and brothers in Christ,**

Have you ever known anyone with authority issues? Authority is the theme running throughout today’s gospel. The chief priests and elders take issue with Jesus’ authority. The two sons challenge their father’s authority. They’re not the only ones with authority issues.

And yes, I’m talking about you. I’m talking about myself. We all have authority issues but I am not talking about authority issues in the way we usually understand them. In our usual understanding of authority issues the obvious question in today’s gospel is whether we recognize and submit to the authority of Jesus and the Father. That question, however, is so obvious that I have to wonder if it is really not the question at the heart of today’s gospel. It is so obvious that I think there has to be something more going on. To jump on that question as the obvious and only question to be answered only reveals our misunderstanding of what true authority is.

More often than not we are confused about authority. We misunderstand it to be based on credentials and expertise, a thick resume, years of education, successes and accomplishments, status and reputation, or the position held in relationship to another. We assume that authority comes from outside a person and that it is given them by their circumstances. In this understanding some have authority and others do not. Who do you think you are? What gives you the right to tell me what to do? Or to use a phrase from my childhood, You’re not the boss of me! That represents our usual way of understanding authority issues. We don’t like someone else teaching us, correcting us, or telling us what to do. We hear

that in the challenge of the chief priests and elders to Jesus, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” We see it in the refusal of the two sons to go to the vineyard.

There is, however, another authority issue at play in today’s gospel. That issue is our failure and sometimes our refusal to recognize, claim, and exercise the authority within us; to go to the vineyard. That’s the authority issue I believe this gospel is holding before us today. So, let me push you a little bit on this authority issue, okay? If you think God is the boss of you, you’ve misunderstood authority. Let go of that idea. God is not the boss of you. God is not the boss of me. God is not the boss of us. God is our author. Every day God authorizes us to enter and sends us into his vineyard, to act in this world with his authority and on his behalf through the gifts he has bestowed upon each one of us.

True authority always comes from within. It is an interior God-given quality not an exterior circumstance. That’s what the chief priests and elders failed to understand. I think that’s why Jesus was always so aggravated with the religious leaders. They chose to exchange their God-given authority for human power. Sometimes we do too. That’s what’s happening in much of our world today. In the absence of true authority there will always be power struggles. Look at the gridlock in our political system. Look at the wars throughout the world. Look at the conflicts in your own relationships. Those are about power, not authority. Our leaders exercise power but very few exercise authority. In the exercise of power, we look to our own interests but in the exercise of authority we look to the interests of others.

Think about the people who hold authority for you. They are not concerned about themselves. They do not dominate or control you. They inspire you; they influence you and empower you. They call forth from your faith, hope, and trust. They expand your world, open new possibilities, and bring forth life and gifts in yourself that you never knew were there. They cause you to reevaluate your life, change your mind, and live differently. That sounds an awful lot like Jesus and it’s very different from those who exercise power. There are people in this world who have no leadership position, title, or theological credentials and yet they have such great authority. I see it in their compassion and gentleness. I hear it in the way they pray. I feel it in their love for others. They too show us the way to the vineyard of our life. That’s what authorities do. But it’s not about them. It doesn’t come from them.

All authority originates in God, but it is not exclusive to God. God shares his authority with us. The authority God shares with us is nothing less than his own divine attributes. It is the expression and manifestation of God’s life in and through our own. That shared authority exists in us and is revealed by us as the many and varied charisms, the gifts, God has imparted on each of our lives. That means every one of us has authority. As your priest I do not have more authority than you. I do not have better authority than you. I just have a different authority. God gives each of us gifts and authority unique to our lives. God is generous, extravagant, with the gifts he gives and the authority he shares. We all have God-given gifts and authority. There is no one without authority. The difference isn’t that some have authority and others don’t. The difference is that some recognize and exercise their authority and others do not. Regardless, God knows and sees the authority he has given us and waits for us to see and know it too. And when we do, we change our mind and go to the vineyard.

So, let me push you a little bit more on your authority issues, okay? What is the authority God has given you? What gifts, what divine attributes, has God bestowed upon you? Are you living from that authority

and sharing those gifts? Have you gone to the vineyard or are you simply mouthing the answers you think God wants to hear?

Yes, conversations with Jesus are dangerous, indeed. We do not begin by interviewing Jesus, but by believing in him, trusting in his authority and following him to the places where he goes. And, in the process, our world is always going to be turned upside down and inside out, our heads left spinning and our tongues stammering. We discover that no matter how much we think we are in control and in charge, whether it be our own lives, the circles in which we function and live, or even the community of faith, we are not. It is God alone who is in charge. And, we like the privileged religious leaders, are always going to discover that our preconceived notions and perceptions of who Jesus is will always be shattered. Jesus will never be captured or controlled or fit into our little boxes. He is always going to disrupt the ways in which righteousness and privilege and piety and power try to control and manage. Jesus will always elude our grasp so that we may be grasped by him and by God's immeasurable grace and boundless love for all. And, when we are grasped by God's grace, the tables have truly been turned. Then, we can truly celebrate a love that is indiscriminate, boundless in mercy, and life-giving for all.

**Amen!**

18 PENTECOST	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II	(also on zoom)
		COFFEE HOUR 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	
19 PENTECOST	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II/ BISHOP' VISITATION	(also on zoom)
		RECEPTION AT THE RECTORY	

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Roe Prosser	Roe Prosser
Coffee Hour	Janet Croft	Bishop's Reception

## 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	Kristen
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

### 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

