

**Church of the Divine Love**

**FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

**PROPER 16**

**AUGUST 25, 2024 9:00 AM**

**HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II**

Prayer before worship – on insert

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn #

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria (sung)

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18**

Psalm 34: 15-22

Second Lesson: **Ephesians 6:10-20**

Gradual Hymn #

Gospel: **John 6: 56-69**

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

The Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, Form VI page 392

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

## THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn #

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:

Eucharistic Prayer B page 367

Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal) page 367

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 August 25, 2024.**

Joshua 24: 1-2a, 14-18, Psalm 34: 15-22; Ephesians 6: 10-20; John 6: 56-69.

#### **Beloved in Christ,**

“But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about his teaching, said to them, ‘Does this offend you?’ Who’s offended by today’s **gospel (John 6:56-69)**? When was the last time Jesus offended you? When has he said something that caused you to trip and stumble? Which of his teachings has caused you to think or say, “This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?” When have you wanted to turn back from following his way because it was more than you could swallow?

I don’t hear many people today talking about stumbling over Jesus’ teachings, complaining that they are difficult, or being offended by what he says and does. And when I look at my own life, I don’t see myself taking offense at or complaining about Jesus either. Why not? Why aren’t we more offended by Jesus? Why aren’t we stumbling and struggling to live the gospel more than we are? The people in today’s

gospels are. Many of Jesus' disciples were grumbling and complaining to each other that his teaching was difficult and more than they could accept. "Many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him." They could no longer stomach his gospel and what it asked of them. The bread of life isn't always sweet.

And it's not just in today's gospel that happens. Remember the rich man who went away grieving, shocked that Jesus told him to sell what he owned, give the money to the poor, and then come follow him (**Mark 10:17-22**)? Or how about that time Jesus went back to Nazareth and taught in the synagogue "and they took offense at him" (**Matthew 13:57; Mark 6:3**)? In Luke's version of that story the people are so angry they want to throw Jesus off the cliff (**Luke 4:29**). And there was that time Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites and they took offense at him (**Matthew 15:1-12**). During the Passover meal Jesus told his disciples, "You will all be scandalized, offended, and made to stumble because of me this night" (**Matthew 26:31**). We see it in Peter's denial and Judas' betrayal but what about us. I don't think we want to be offended. It might reveal things we don't want to see or hear. I think most of us work pretty hard not to be offended by Jesus and his gospel. But what if we should be offended?

Maybe the degree to which we are or can be offended by the gospel is the degree to which we believe it to be and experience it as flesh and blood real. Maybe that's why the people in today's gospel are grumbling, complaining, and taking offense. They know Jesus isn't simply talking about bread and wine. He's talking about a life that is flesh and blood real. To eat and drink symbolizes entering into a deep and personal relationship with Jesus. It emphasizes the necessity of consuming Him, not in a literal sense, but spiritually. This sacrificial language reminds us that Jesus calls us to partake in His sufferings and His grace. We are invited to share in His very life, which transforms us. Just as food nourishes our bodies, Christ's presence sustains our souls. Without Him, we are spiritually malnourished. In a world filled with distractions and competing demands, we must prioritize our relationship with Christ. Are we deliberately seeking this daily sustenance? Jesus links our communion with Him to our relationship with the Father: "Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me." Here lies the essence of our faith. Jesus emphasizes that His life comes from the Father. Their relationship is a model for us. Just as Jesus relies on the Father, we too must rely on Christ for our spiritual nourishment. Understanding that our lives are inherently connected to Christ deepens our reliance on Him, the source of all life. Feeding on Christ is not a one-time action but a continual process. It represents a lifestyle of dependence on Him. Eternal life is not merely a future promise; it begins now as we cultivate our relationship with Jesus. Living because of Him means our daily choices reflect His love and grace.

If the gospel is not flesh and blood real it won't offend us or cause us to stumble and fall. It asks nothing of us. It's food out of a box but it's not the bread of life. It's some nice ideas about how to live, and some feel good verses to memorize, but there is no life within us. It becomes what **Dietrich Bonhoeffer** called "**cheap grace**." Jesus said that whatever we do or do not do for the "least of these" we either do or do not do for him. He gives several examples including one about welcoming stranger. (**Matthew 25:35, 43**). We are to welcome the stranger as Jesus. Jesus is in every stranger, every needy person. That's beautiful

until it is flesh and blood real, until the stranger is a migrant at our border, in our town, on our property. Then what do we do? We love the cross of Jesus. We wear it, hang it on our walls, and decorate with it. It reminds us of how much Jesus loves us. We follow his way of the cross. We know that means denying ourselves, taking up our cross, and following him. But what happens when we're asked to give up our individual autonomy or change an aspect of our life for the well-being of someone else? That's when the cross becomes flesh and blood real.

If loving, forgiving, welcoming, and taking up our cross and a thousand other things Jesus taught and did - do not offend and challenge us, cause us to look at how we are living, make us reconsider our beliefs and actions, then maybe the gospel just isn't flesh and blood real for us. Maybe we've disembodied the gospel and separated the Word from everyday flesh. And if the gospel is not flesh and blood real, then what difference does it make? Why are we here today? I want us to live a gospel that is flesh and blood real. I want us to be offended by it. I hope the gospel never loses its power to offend. And I hope you and I never lose our capacity to be offended. Here's why I say that. Every time the gospel offends us, we have bumped up against a limitation in our life. When the gospel is offensive it's showing us something about ourselves. It's revealing the limits of our love, forgiveness, welcome; the limits of our justice, peacemaking, compassion; the limits of our life and humanity. And it's pointing the way to new life and more life. What if we should be offended by Jesus and the gospel? What if our offense at the gospel is not a failure but an opportunity for "life and life abundant" (**John 10:10**)? What if what offends us is opening a door to new life and calling us to grow and change? What if each limitation against which we bump is a starting line and not the end of the line?

"Do you also wish to go away?" That's the question Jesus asked the offended disciples. It's the question we face every time we are offended and bump up against our limitations. It's the question we face every time the situation is difficult, messy, unclear, and asks more of us than we want to give. Sometimes the answer is yes. Sometimes we turn back and we defend ourselves rather than let ourselves be offended. Other times, however, we trust that the very person or situation that offends us has the words of eternal life. Beloved, Jesus is calling each of us into a deeper relationship with Him, one marked by intimacy, dependence, and eternal life. Let us commit to daily partaking of His grace, allowing Him to nourish us so that we may reflect His love to the world around us. **Let us pray: Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of Your Son, the Bread of Life. Help us to seek Him daily, to consume Him in faith, and to live fully in His grace. May we be transformed by this communion with Him, shining His light in a world that desperately needs it. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.**

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 16

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

COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS

MONDAY 8:30 PM AA MEETING

WEDNESDAY 7:00 PM AL-ANON MEETING

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

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 17

9:00 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II (also on zoom)  
COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS

LOOKING AHEAD – 10:15 AM SERICE RESUMES SEPT. 8TH

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Roe Prosser	Deb Giordano
Coffee	Giordanos	Nolans

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:

Sister Eddie	Betty Curley	Jess
Bob Curley	Steve Curley	Art

Chris Dickson	Kate Jones	Deb P.
John Mulligan	John Rocco	Evelyn
Manetta Family	Donna A.	Kristen
Christopher	Bernie Walther	Celeste
Danielle	Phil Ryder	Henry
Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Del
Robert Hosey	Beverly Noel	Aidan
Sally & Roger	Sophia	Ciara
Mary & Family	Ann Turco	Jan
Grace Schinella	Gladys Hadija	Vincent
Michael & Family	Matthew Treasure	Mo
Michelle & Baby	Marjorie Guerrier	Joseph
Nathan Treadwell	Warren	

All people and countries suffering from violence, hatred and natural disaster.

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