

Church of the Divine Love

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

AUGUST 27, 2023 9:00 AM

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

Prayer before worship – on insert

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn **#525, vs 1-2,4-5 – The Church’s one foundation**

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria (sung) page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Isaiah 51:1-6**

Psalm 138

Second Lesson: **Romans 12:1-8**

Gradual Hymn – **Here I Am to Worship** (on insert)

Gospel: **Matthew 16:13-20**

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 **#400, vs 1-3,7 – All creatures of our God**

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 **#488 – Be thou my vision**

Post Communion Prayer page 365

Prayer for Peace – on insert

Prayer of St. Francis page 833

Dismissal Hymn – **Desert Road** (on insert)

Dismissal

Sermon Sunday August 27, 2023

Isaiah 51:1-6; Psalm 138; Romans 12:1-8; Matthew 16:13-20.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

What does it mean for you today that Jesus is the “Messiah, the Son of the living God?” That question is at the center of a conversation I’ve been having with myself for years but even more so in light of everything that has happened over the last three years. I don’t know about you but I feel an urgency and intensity about everything things days, including this question about who Jesus is. Maybe you feel that too.

So, what does it mean for us today to stand with Peter and say that Jesus is the “Messiah, the Son of the living God?” The last three years have held this question before me – before us – like never before. I think we are discovering a larger and more relevant understanding of what it means for Jesus to be the

Messiah, the Son of the living God. Here's what I mean by that. I thought I knew or had some idea of what it meant for Jesus to be the Messiah. It used to be mostly a Sunday morning kind of question, but now it's an everyday kind of question. It used to be about the future, but now it's about the present moment. It's no longer only or even primarily about saving souls, it's about changing hearts. And if Jesus is not changing your heart and my heart then he is not the Messiah of our lives. And if he is our Messiah then he necessarily changes how we live.

Division and distancing characterize our lives today and yet I have never been more aware of our interconnectedness and the ways we, for better or worse, impact and affect each other. The boundaries of me and mine – my life, my family, my needs, my community, my people – are being expanded. It's really not all about me. So, when the Messiah says something like "love your neighbor" I'm having to redefine who my neighbor is and what that is asking of me. And if I follow this Messiah as "the way, the truth, and the life" what does that ask of me in my marriage and parenting? How does it shape my friendships and other relationships? Am I discerning between the light and darkness in what I read and post on social media? What happens when his way, truth, and life conflict with the way, the truth, and the life of my friends, my family, my country?

And how many more times must the Messiah say, "Peace be with you," or "Do not be afraid," before I take those words to heart? If he really is my Messiah, then I have to look at the values I hold, the priorities I establish, and the truths I claim for myself and see if they align with his. When he says, "Follow me," or "Come and see," do I go or do I blaze my own path? It seems there is not a part of my life over which he does not want to be the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Sometimes I take comfort in that, other times I take offense. Those are the kind of things that come up for me when I think of Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the living God. What about you? In what ways does it matter or make a difference in your life that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God? Is that just a title we give him or is it asking something of us? Is it changing how we live, and if not, why do we come here Sunday after Sunday?

I ask these questions not just of you but of myself. I ask them because I struggle with that gap between knowing the correct answer, and living that answer. Where does that struggle come up for you? When have you lived in the gap between knowing the correct answer and doing something with it? I think that's what Jesus has set before Peter today. I think that's what Paul is writing about in today's epistle (Romans 12:1-8) when he warns us about being conformed instead of transformed. And I think Jesus experienced that gap in the Garden of Gethsemane as he struggled with what he knew to be his Father's will. It's not enough to just give the correct answer. Maybe Jesus is saying to us, show me what the kingdom looks like in your life, in your relationships, in your context. The kingdom comes locally, temporarily, intermittently, episodically in our particular circumstances through what we bind and what we lose. The kingdom comes, is actually here, is really real, whenever we love our enemies, do good to those who hate us, pray for those who abuse us, turn the other cheek to those who strike us, welcome the stranger, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, forgive our offender, give to the beggar. The kingdom is not a reward for these works; the kingdom is these works. Hoping Against Hope, Confessions of a

Postmodern Pilgrim, wherever these works are happening, there is the kingdom. The kingdom is about what we do and how we live. The kingdom is what life looks like when we respond to what God is calling for. The kingdom comes every time you and I give existence to the insistence of God.

Have you ever thought of yourself as having the responsibility of giving existence to the kingdom? Have you ever thought that God might need you as much as you need God? We can stand up every day and declare that Jesus is the “Messiah, the Son of the living God” but what difference does that make if we are not losing people from injustice, racism, hunger, poverty, guilt, shame, fear, anger? What difference does that make if we are not losing people to go in peace? What difference does that make if we are not binding ourselves to each other in love, compassion, forgiveness, hospitality, healing, hope, prayer? What difference does that make if we are not binding up the broken hearted?

Re-centering is our life’s work and it is not easy work. It means we must continually let go of what we thought centered our lives and move to our true center; the Messiah, the Son of God, the living one. The opportunity for re-centering is hidden within the ups and downs of our life. It is something we do over and over and we don’t always get it right. Look at Peter. He is the one of little faith sinking in the water. He doesn’t understand the parables. He argues with Jesus and ends up being called Satan. He falls asleep when he is supposed to be praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. He denies knowing Jesus. Through it all he was being shaped, formed, molded into the rock Jesus knew him to be. Ultimately Peter was crucified for re-centering, following, and loving Jesus.

I don’t want to just give the right answer. I want to be the right answer and to do the right answer, don’t you? We’ve each been given the keys of the kingdom, the power to bind and the power to lose. What are you doing with that in your life today? What are you unlocking for yourself? And what are you unlocking in the life of another? In what ways are you binding yourself to the life of another for his or her well-being? “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you lose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Who do you say that I am? Don’t just answer his question. Go live the answer. Discover the rockiness that Jesus knows you to be. Live with hope in the midst of despair. Love your neighbor as yourself. Though the gates of death open to you know that they cannot prevail. Care for the poor, feed the hungry, and defend the oppressed. Offer forgiveness despite your anger. Pray when you are too busy to pray. Love your enemies despite your fear. Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow him. Practice generosity in a declining economy. Re-center even when it feels like you cannot stand up. Do these. Be the rock. Be the rock on which Jesus’ church stands before the world. **Amen!**

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	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
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

13 PENTECOST	9:00 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II VESTRY MEETING	(also o zoom)
MONDAY	8:30 PM	AA MEETING	
WEDNESDAY	7:00 PM	AL-ANON	
THURSDAY	10AM-2PM 8:30 PM	THRIFT SHOP AA MEETING	
SATURDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP	
14 PENTECOST	9:00 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II	(also on zoom)

**Sunday, Sept. 10th – We will return to the 10:15 AM service,
followed by coffee hour.**

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Deb Giordano	Jess Berbeck

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,

form 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

