

**Church of the Divine Love**  
**FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY**  
**JANUARY 28, 2024 10:15 AM**  
**HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II**

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn #

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria (sung) page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Deuteronomy 18:15-20**

Psalm 111

Second Lesson: **1 Corinthians 8:1-13**

Gradual Hymn #

Gospel: **Mark 1:21-28**

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 #

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:

Eucharistic Prayer B page 367

Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal)	page 367
Hymn during Consecration printed on insert	
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 January 28, 2024**

Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 111; 1 Corinthians 8: 1-13; Mark 1: 21-28.

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

Do you remember the first time you ever felt alienated from yourself? Maybe you looked at your life and realized that's not who you were or who you wanted to be. Or you felt like you were a stranger in your own skin. Do you remember what that was like?

Take a couple minutes and look back over your life. What are your stories of being alienated from yourself? What's your first memory of that? What is your most recent memory of that? When have you felt like a stranger in your own skin? I think we all live as women and men with unclean spirits. They are those times when we betray our own integrity, when we are confused and lost about who we are or who we want to be, when we look at our life and don't recognize ourselves or like what we see. Or maybe we want our life to be different. We want to stop causing trouble and difficulty for ourselves. We want to be more or different than what we have become. I think that's what it's like to live with an unclean spirit.

By unclean spirit I don't mean that we are bad people, defective human beings, or hopeless sinners. I just mean that we've turned against ourselves. We've turned away from the truth about who we really

are. We've become confused about ourselves and lost. It happens in so many ways and so easily. It sneaks up on us. It happens to us not only as individuals but collectively. That seems to be what much of the craziness in our world today is about. We are living lost to ourselves. Countries, governments, churches, businesses, organizations and groups are estranged from themselves. It's all described in today's gospel (Mark 1:21-28). There's a man with an unclean spirit "in their synagogue." He's not unique among them or us. He's representative and he speaks not just for himself but also for and as one of them. What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us"? The people in the synagogue do not tell him to be quiet, to sit down, or to get out. They seem pretty happy to let him speak for them because he is one of them and they are him.

He's become so familiar and accepted in their lives and community and so much a part of who they are that they neither react to nor are they affected by him. He's not the unusual or strange thing about that day. Who is? Who is the unusual and strange one that day? Jesus. Jesus is the one that astounds them and seems so different from what they've seen or heard before. They are so lost to themselves that the good news of Jesus becomes strange and unusual. "What is this?" they ask, "A new teaching – with authority!" I wonder if that happen to us too. I wonder if sometimes we become so lost to ourselves, so self-alienated, so self-estranged, that the good news sounds strange and a bit crazy to us. It seems the more we look at our life and world the stranger the good news sounds. And I've come to realize that's more a statement about having an unclean spirit than it is about the gospel of Christ. It's a symptom of our self-alienation. The great tragedy of this alienation, this self-estrangement, is that We tend to let the most familiar and craziest voices among us speak for us.

We're no longer surprised when the demonic shows up. I am talking about the attitudes that deny human dignity, the powers that destroy life, the self-interest and greed that refuse to see a common and interdependent life. We may not like it but we're not too surprised at what's on the news. Are we really that surprised when there is another mass shooting, another scandal? We let those outer voices, whether it's CNN, Fox, a parent, our spouse, a friend, a priest, have greater influence in our lives than that deep inner voice of truth and we lose just a bit more of ourselves. We forget that what is true, good, and beautiful are neither objects outside of us nor goals to be achieved, but realities within us to be recognized. That's what Jesus is doing in the synagogue in Capernaum today. He is calling them back to themselves. The first thing they want to know is what Jesus has to do with them. He's the stranger. "Have you come to destroy us?" And I think the answer is yes. He comes to destroy everything that is not truly us. He comes to destroy the false voices in our lives. He comes to destroy the powers that diminish and deny the fullness of life and human dignity. He comes to destroy our false identities. Notice, however, that he does not exclude or reject the man with the unclean spirit. He clarifies for him that the unclean spirit is not his truest spirit. It is not a spirit of life. Jesus calls this man back to himself.

And it is in that moment of self-recognition that the man with the unclean spirit also recognizes Jesus. "I know who you are," he says, "the Holy One of God." That's something for us to hang on to. Even in the midst of our self-estrangement there is still something within us that knows and can recognize the Holy One. No matter how lost we are to ourselves the ability to recognize the Holy One remains. The reason

we can is because the Holy One has never left us. The Holy One is within us. The Holy One is us. Maybe the recognition of who Jesus calls us back to be is what saves our life. Maybe that's the antidote to the ways in which we have become alienated from ourselves. It means recognizing the truth and the untruth about our lives, the beauty of our life as well as the disfigurements, the places that are whole and the places that are broken. We've all got them.

As much as we may want to deny or run from those things, the recognition of those things is also the place of healing and wholeness, a place from which new life born, a place that gives rise to new hope. It's a place in which we can catch a glimpse of our truest and best self. That means recognition has to become for us an intentional spiritual practice. We must look critically at our lives, reflect deeply on who have become and the shape of our life, wrestle with difficult questions, and search within. It also means that we have to let go of the idea that the one with an unclean spirit is someone apart from and outside our lives.

Jesus is teaching in the synagogue. His authority fills not just the place but each person there. And almost immediately this man with an unclean spirit shows up. The presence of Jesus, the man with a clean spirit, draws out the presence of the man with an unclean spirit. Jesus has that effect on people. His authority and teaching reveal the truth about his listeners' lives. This one with the unclean spirit is an image of what the lives of those in the synagogue look like. His uncleanness is not about personal hygiene, immorality, being bad, or Judaism. Instead, his presence "in their synagogue" describes the disease of their soul, their fragmented lives, and the many voices within them. In looking at him they see themselves and they are astounded by the contrast of the one who has a clean spirit.

What's the recognition for us? In what ways are we lost to ourselves? What's broken? How are we an alien to our own life or a stranger in our own skin? However, we might answer those questions, whatever our self-alienation might be, Jesus enters the synagogue of our life and calls us back to ourselves. He will not run from or avoid our self-alienation and the many ways we've become estranged from ourselves. He stands with us in the midst of it, inviting us into recognition. He clarifies the truth about who we are. And he does it over and over. It might take years of recognition but the promise of Christ holds true. One day we will look at ourselves and say, "I know you. You're the holy one of God." **Amen!**

4 EPIPHANY	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 MEETING
-----------	---------	-----------------

THURSDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP	
	8:30 PM	AA MEETING	
SAURDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP	
5 EPIPHANY	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II	(also on zoom)
		COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS	

ASH WEDNESDAY – FEBRUARY 14<sup>TH</sup> – 7:00 PM  
 HOLY EUCHARIST & IMPOSITION OF ASHES

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Deb Giordano	Anthony Giordano
Coffee	Nolans	Giordanos

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	Donna Edwards	Jess
-----------------	---------------	------

Bob Curley	Beverly Noel	Art
Chris Dickson	Kate Jones	Deb P.
Michael Echevarria	John Rocco	Judy
Christopher	Warren	Kristen
Charlotte H.	Bernie Walther	Celeste
Jerry & Family	Phil Ryder	Carolyn
Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Del
Robert Hosey	Lourdes S.	Aidan
Sally & Roger	Sophia	Carol K.
Mary & Family	Ciara	Jan
Nathan Treadwell	Gladys Hadija	Vincent
Michael & Family	Matthew Treasure	Mo
Jean Estinvil Quatorze	Jean Wildy	Nicolas

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.

To add or make changes to prayer list during the week, email

Janet Croft at [jmc220@optonline.net](mailto:jmc220@optonline.net).

## Prayer for the New Year

God our Father, thank you for being the God who walks besides those who love Him in the Valley of the Shadow of Death. I rejoice in the continued presence of the Holy Spirit with me, so that I am never alone. Lord, I lift up a sincere request for happiness during this year of difficulty. Help me find joy, that I may be strengthened spiritually, and happiness that I may continue to engage with those around me with Christian love. Sometimes it can be hard to see Your hand moving when everything around me seems dark. Help me find happiness so that I can see Your work, even if I do not understand it fully right now. I know that You use all things for Your glory, and for my good. I ask that You keep my focus on You during this New Year. In the name of Jesus Christ, I pray. 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 forever. Amen