

Church of the Divine Love
FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
SEPTEMBER 3, 2023 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) page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Jeremiah 15:15-21**

Psalm 26:1-8

Second Lesson: **Romans 12:9-21**

Gradual Hymn

Gospel: **Matthew 16:21-28**

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 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 #

Post Communion Prayer page 365

Prayer for Peace – on insert

Prayer of St. Francis page 833

Dismissal Hymn

Dismissal

Sermon Sunday September 3, 2023

Jeremiah 15:15-21; Psalm 26:1-8; Romans 12:9-21; Matthew 16:21-28.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

What would you say if I told you that every day is the third day? What would you think if I told you that resurrection is happening every day everywhere? What if I told you that resurrection is happening even in the current political, economic, and racial struggles of today; even in the midst of the pandemic; and even in our divisions and disagreements about who we are and the values we hold? Well, consider yourselves told because it is. Resurrection is happening. Can you see it? Are you experiencing it? Is it real for you? If so, what does it look like? Where are you seeing life and more life? What difference is resurrection making in your life today? And if you can't see it and aren't experiencing it, if it's not real for you, why not? Are you standing with Peter in the God forbid it place?

I have stood next to Peter and echoed his words more times than I'd like to admit. Maybe you have too. I can only guess at what's going on in Peter when he says what he does, but I can tell you what it is for me.

I'm trying to reshape my life and world to be like I want it to be rather than facing and dealing with what is before me. I want to escape and run away. I'm in denial and sometimes delusion. I'm tired and worn out. I'm anxious and afraid. I feel overwhelmed and powerless. I feel responsible for fixing everything and assume it's all up to me. I feel like life is a racket and I'm the ball.

Does any of that sound familiar? What's the God forbid it place like for you? Every time we stand in the God forbid it place, we are full of forgetfulness. We forget that Jesus came that we may have life, and have it abundantly (John 10:10); We forget that he is the resurrection and the life (John 11:25); We forget that he is the light (John 8:12) the darkness cannot overcome (John 1:5); We forget his words, take courage; I have conquered the world! (John 16:33); We forget that he is with us always, even to the end of the age (Matthew 28:20); We forget his promise, I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you (John 14:18); and We forget that he is making all things new (Revelation 21:5). Mostly, though, I think we forget that resurrection is not only or even primarily about what happens after our physical death. We forget that resurrection is a present reality happening in the ordinary and everyday circumstances of our lives, that there is no place, no time, no circumstance in which resurrection is not happening. We are setting our mind not on divine things but on human things, and we have forgotten all the things Jesus has shown, told, and taught us.

So maybe we need to rethink what resurrection means and looks like. Maybe we need a new understanding of resurrection. Maybe we need to start looking for resurrection in places we never thought about before. When messengers from John the Baptist ask Jesus if he is the one, they've been waiting for, the Messiah, the Christ, he tells them, Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them (Luke 7:22). We all have our programs for happiness. These programs for happiness underlie the expectations we have for ourselves and others. They are the illusions that distort our thinking and seeing. They are the delusions that we readily accept and refuse to question. Our programs for happiness are designed to ensure our survival and security, to give us esteem and affection, and to put us in power and control.

They're the means by which we try to protect ourselves and get what we want. Most of our programs for happiness focus on love, reputation, success, accomplishments, predictability, and getting our needs met. They are the programs of those who want to save their life. Our programs for happiness work fine until they don't, and there will be a day when our programs for happiness fail. On that day we come face-to-face with our own powerlessness. We recognize that we are not and never were in control. We realize that we are unable to save ourselves or anyone else. On that day we suffer. That suffering can, however, open our eyes, hearts, and minds to another way, a new way, a different way. It's not hard to discover our programs for happiness. Look for the places of fear in your life. I don't mean just any fear. I'm talking about the kind of fear you feel in the pit of your stomach, the kind of fear that keeps you awake at night and enveloped in darkness, the kind of fear that stalks you in the daytime. That fear is telling you that one of your programs for happiness is being threatened. God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you, Peter says. We might also add in parenthesis, Or to me. Peter is trying to protect his program for happiness. He has his mind set not on divine things but on human things. Peter wants

Jesus to be a part of his program for happiness rather than becoming a part of Jesus' program for life. How often do we do that?

In last week's gospel Peter confessed Jesus to be the "Messiah, the Son of the living God." Now Peter wants Jesus to conform to Peter's understanding of what that means. Don't we sometimes do that? We believe, know, confess, pray, and then we expect Jesus to participate in, support, give success to our programs to happiness. That's neither who nor how the Messiah, the Son of the living God, is. Peter correctly named who Jesus is but he misunderstood with that name entails. To deny the way of the cross is to ask Jesus to leave us and the world unchanged. It means we are willing to settle for moments of happiness. Christ offers more. We can never really understand what it means to believe in, confess, or follow Jesus as "the Messiah, the Son of the living God," until we deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow him. The cross is not usually a part of our program for happiness. It sure wasn't a part of Peter's program. The cross stands as a sign of contradiction to our programs for happiness.

God does not give us crosses to bear. The burdens, difficulties, losses, and frustrations we encounter every day are not our cross. They are just the circumstances of life. Taking up our cross is not the means by which we are made good, acceptable, or lovable in God's eyes. They're not God's punishment for our sins or his test of our faithfulness. The cross does not justify our sufferings in this world, it transforms them. To deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Christ means that we are willing to let go of our self-created programs for happiness. It means we are willing to exchange our programs for happiness for abundant life, and to forego the taste of death. That's what we have learned in life and that's what Jesus is teaching Peter and us. What are our programs for happiness? What will we do with them today? Tomorrow? The next? Do we want to really live or do we just want to try to be happy?

Finally, let us understand the death of Jesus to be life changing for us. He died for us so that we could have life. If we die for him by not following our fleshly, sinful desires we will have true life now and, in the life, to come. What have you gained if you fulfill every sinful desire in your mind and lose your eternal soul? Setting our minds on the things of God means we will look at life through the lens of God's purposes and not doing whatever sounds good or feels good for the moment in this life. The cross must stand as the memorial to that decision every day. Those who have carried crosses of compassionate service to others have not only gained a meaningful life, but have also caught a glimpse of God's eternal kingdom. **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

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

SATURDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP	
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15 PENTECOST	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II	(also on zoom)
		COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS	

SUPPORT THE FOOD PANTRY – DROP-OFF IN THE KITCHEN

Sunday, Sept. 17th – Parish Picnic after the service. There is a sign-up sheet at the back of the church. Rain date- Sept.24th.

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Deb Giordano	Jess Berbeck
Coffee Hour	- - - - -	Nolans

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

