

Church of the Divine Love
TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
OCTOBER 15, 2023 10:15 AM
HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

Prayer before worship – on insert

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn **#321 – My God, thy table now is spread**

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria (sung) page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Isaiah 25:1-9**

Psalm 23

Second Lesson: **Philippians 4:1-9**

Gradual Hymn **#481 – Rejoice, the Lord is King!**

Gospel: **Matthew 22:1-14**

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 **#7 – Christ, whose glory fills the skies**

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:

Eucharistic Prayer A	page 361
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 #335 – I am the bread of life	
Post Communion Prayer	page 365
Prayer for Peace – on insert	
Prayer of St. Francis	page 833
Dismissal Hymn #490 – I want to walk as a child of the light	
Dismissal	

Sermon Sunday October 15, 2023

Isaiah 25: 1-9; Psalm 23; Philippians 4: 1-9; Matthew 22:1-14.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

So let me ask you this. Does today's gospel fit your image of the kingdom of heaven? Is that what you are seeking every time you come to church? Is the way Jesus describes the kingdom what you have in mind when you pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven?" And if it is, who are you praying that it be done to? Yourself or someone else?

This is a difficult and painful text. It feels like there's something left unwritten that we aren't reading, like there's something left unspoken that we aren't hearing. There are just too many contradictions and inconsistencies to take it at face value. If today's gospel teaches us anything, it's that we can't simply hear or read our sacred texts and glibly respond, "Thanks be to God" or "Praise to you, Lord Christ." Every text invites us to struggle not just with the text itself but with the text in our life, and to work out our faith in light of that struggle. And that's what I want us to do with today's gospel. I want us to wrestle and argue with this gospel until it begins to take shape in a way that reshapes our lives.

So how do you like the image of a wedding banquet as the kingdom? Joy, love, feasting, family, the unity

of two becoming one. Does that work for you? I'm good with that. It's the kind of thing I want for you and myself. And it fits nicely with Jesus performing his first miracle at the Wedding in Cana of Galilee. It's consistent with today's words from Isaiah that the Lord "will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines," and it echoes the psalmist saying that the Lord spread a table before him and filled his cup to overflowing. But look what happens next. The king sends messengers to tell those who had been invited, "Dinner is ready, come on. Let's get this party started." But those who had been invited refused to come. They mistreated and killed the messengers. And then the king sent his army to destroy those who had been invited and burn their city to the ground. How about that for an image of the kingdom? Is that your experience of God? Are we going back to "an eye for an eye?" Is that what you want to teach your children and grandchildren about God? Is that what you are praying for when you pray the Lord's prayer? And if that is the kingdom then what do we do with "Thou shalt not murder," "Turn the other cheek," "Love your enemies," or Isaiah telling us that the Lord will "swallow up death forever ... and wipe away the tears from all faces?" There's got to be more to this story than what it says.

Next the king sends messengers to invite anyone, everyone, good and bad. It's as if they are saying, it doesn't matter who you are or what you have done, this feast is for you. And that matches all those stories about Jesus eating and spending time with tax collectors and sinners, healing lepers, forgiving the woman caught in adultery, giving sight to the blind and life to those in the tombs. That sounds more like the kingdom to me. What do you think? I can't help but think of today's epistle in which Paul says, "Rejoice, in the Lord always, again I will say, Rejoice," "Do not worry about anything," "The Lord is near." And I remember Jesus saying, "Do not be afraid," "I came that you may have life, and have it abundantly," "My peace I give you."

The kingdom is for everyone. No one gets left out. All is well. That sounds good. But then a man shows up without a wedding robe. He survived the king's army, escaped the burning of his city, and accepted the invitation only to be thrown into the outer darkness because he wasn't properly dressed. Is there really a dress code for the kingdom? Is that what you believe the kingdom is like? And why didn't the king give the poor guy a wedding robe? After all, didn't Jesus say something about welcoming the stranger and clothing the naked? So, which is it: welcome and clothe the stranger or kick her or him out because they're not properly dressed?

Today's gospel is a collage of contradictions and inconsistencies: a wedding banquet and a blood bath; messengers of good news and truth, and killers of those messengers; an enraged king that sends troops to destroy his own citizens; an open invitation to all and the exclusion of one who accepts the invitation. I sure hope there's more to the kingdom than that, don't you? Because today's gospel sounds more like headline news than good news. And yet we can't just turn away from today's gospel. It's asking something of us. To ignore or gloss over the contradictions and inconsistencies in today's gospel is to ignore or gloss over the contradictions and inconsistencies in each of our lives and the world. I don't want to do that and I hope you don't either. Let's face up to ourselves. Let's look at what is and imagine

what could be. The contradictions and inconsistencies in our lives and our country today are telling us that something has been lost, that things are not right, that we're sabotaging the life we say we want and the values we claim to hold. We are betraying ourselves, one another, and the kingdom.

Today's gospel is a mirror holding before us all the contradictions and inconsistencies of our lives and the world. I wonder what contradictions and inconsistencies today's gospel is showing you about yourself, about our country, about the ways in which we treat each other. What's missing? What's not, right? What is it asking you to wrestle with? What is it asking us as a nation to wrestle with? I wonder if Jesus is telling this parable and hoping to shake us up, hoping to wake us up. I wonder if he is hoping that we will say, No, Jesus. We have followed your life. We have listened to your words. We've seen what you do. We know there is more to the kingdom than that. Don't you look at the world today and think, there's got to be more than this? Don't you hear the cries of people and say to yourself, there's got to be more than this? Don't you look at the brokenness, the injustice, the hurt and say to yourself, we can do better? If you do, you are absolutely correct. I think we all want that kingdom. I think that's why we showed up today and why we keep showing up. I think that's why you and I struggle with these texts. I think it's why we say our prayers and weep. We've heard the calling of something more.

What is that more for you? What does more look like in the face of one has been excluded and told he or she doesn't belong? What is that more amidst violence and killing? What would more be when power is abused and people are hurt and oppressed? What would more look like when we turn on one another? How would more respond when we say things like, that's not my problem, He got what he deserves, why should I care or get involved? What would the more of that kingdom look like in your life, in your relationship, in the conflicts and struggles you have with others? What does the more of that kingdom ask of you in the criticisms and doubts you have of yourself and others? What would that more offer when you feel overwhelmed and lost?

I think that more would be the real kingdom of heaven, the one that's been lost, the one that needs to be recovered. It's the kingdom that speaks of love, compassion, forgiveness, mercy, kindness, beauty, hope. If that's truly what we want, if that really is what we seek when we pray Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven, then you and I must become those things. It's up to us to become the more for each other and for the life of the world. Amen!

20 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	10:00 AM	FUNERAL SERVICE FOR TONY DIEMONT	
	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP	
21 PENTECOST	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II	(also on zoom)
		COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS	

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Roe Prosser	Roe Prosser
Coffee Hour	Giordanos	Janet Croft

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	Lourdes S.	Kaylee
Bob Curley	Donna Amundsen	Art
Chris Dickson	Kate Jones	Deb P.
Michael Echevarria	John Rocco	Bethany
Christopher	Warren	Kristen

Charlotte H.	Bernie Walther	Celeste
Mo (Rachael)	Phil Ryder	Carolyn
Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Del
Robert Hosey	Robert Sweat	Aidan
Sally & Roger	Sophia	Carol K.
Mary & Family	Ciara	Dennis L.
Nathan Treadwell	Vincent	Judy
Michael & Family		

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.

The departed: Tony Diemont

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