

**Church of the Divine Love**

**FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT**

**FEBRUARY 18, 2024 10:15 AM**

**HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II**

*Please observe silence      Alleluias are omitted during Lent*

Prayer before worship – on insert

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn **#143 – The glory of these forty days**

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Kyrie page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Genesis 9: 8-17**

Psalm 25:1-9

Second Lesson: **1 Peter 3:18-22**

Gradual Hymn **#150 – Forty days and forty nights**

Gospel: **Mark 1:9-15**

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 **#147 – Now let us all with one accord**

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 **#121 – Christ, when for us you were baptized**

Post Communion Prayer page 365

Prayer for Peace – on insert

Prayer of St. Francis page 833

Dismissal Hymn **#448 – O love, how deep, how broad, how high**

Dismissal

### **Sermon Sunday February 18, 2024**

Genesis 9:8-17; Psalm 25:1-9; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:9-15.

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

At some point we all leave home. It is something we do throughout our lives. Over and over, we leave home. We've all done it. We leave home physically, emotionally, and spiritually. We leave those places that are familiar, comfortable, predictable. Sometimes we can't wait to leave. We're ready to go. Other times we would rather not leave. Sometimes we choose to leave. Other times the circumstances of life push us out the door. Regardless of how or why it happens, leaving home is a part of life. It happens in lots of different ways and times.

For children it might be the first day of school or going to summer camp. Young adults move out of their parent's home to start college or go to work. The significant changes of life are forms of leaving home: a marriage, a divorce, the birth of a child, the death of a loved one. New employment or the loss of

employment are about leaving home. Moving to a new town, retirement, the loss of health all involve leaving home. The major decisions that bring us to the crossroads of life are also about leaving home. Leaving home can be difficult, frightening, and risky. It invites us to change and opens us to new discoveries about ourselves. It challenges our understandings of where we find significance, meaning, and security. Ultimately, though, leaving home is the beginning of our spiritual journey and growth. We are more vulnerable to and in need of God when we leave home.

Leaving home is not, however, simply about the circumstances of life. It is the way of God's people. Adam and Eve left the garden. Noah left his dry land home. God told Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you" (Gn. 12:1). Jacob ran away from home fearing for his life. Moses and the Israelites left their homes in Egypt. And in today's gospel Jesus is leaving home. As Mark tells it, "Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee" to the Jordan River. He left his home and now stands with John in the Jordan, the border between home and the wilderness. There he is baptized. The heavens are torn apart, the Spirit like a dove descends, and a voice declares, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." From there "the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness." Baptism may happen in the river but the baptismal life begins in the wilderness.

At Jesus' baptism God declares Jesus to be God's Son, the beloved, with whom God is well pleased. That is Jesus' baptismal identity. That's who he is before he ever enters the wilderness, before he ever faces the first temptation, before he ever teaches, heals, preaches, or walks on water. Now he must learn what that means in the wilderness of life. It's one thing for God to believe and declare Jesus to be the beloved Son with whom God is well pleased, but it's another for Jesus to believe that for himself, and let everything he does arise from that baptismal identity. That's the temptation and struggle in the wilderness. It was for Jesus and it is for us. And today that wilderness is a mass shooting at some schools in the United States. We have once again stepped into the wilderness of gun violence.

This story is not, however, just about Jesus. It is our story too. The Father's words refer to Jesus in a uniquely literal way but they also apply to each one of us. By grace, gift, and the choice of God we are his beloved daughters and sons. If leaving home, getting baptized, and going to the wilderness is Jesus's way then it is our way too. We leave behind our old identity, we are identified and claimed by God as his children, and we go to the wilderness. That's what this holy season of Lent is about. It is no coincident that on Wednesday we were marked with the ashes of remembrance, the dust of our creation, and today the gospel takes us to the wilderness. The two cannot be separated. Wednesday's ashes lead us to wilderness soil. Lent is about leaving home and leaving home, in Lent and life, always takes us to the wilderness. The wilderness is a place of loss and grief, disappointment, and regret. It's a place of break ups and break downs. It's a deserted place. It's a place where we bump up against our limitations and face our powerlessness. It's a place of risk and vulnerability, uncertainty, and without guarantees. It's where we realize once again or maybe for the first time that every day our life hangs in the balance. It's where we discover who we are and what really matters.

I wonder what that brings up for you today. What does it feel like to face your own mortality? In what ways are you experiencing the fragility of life today? What are you learning about yourself and how you want to live? The wilderness is an in between place. It is a place of liminality, a threshold. We are betwixt and between. Neither here nor there. We have left behind what was and what will be is not yet clear. In the wilderness we come face to face with the reality of our lives; things done and left undone, our fears, our hopes and dreams, our sorrows and losses, as well as the unknown. These facts of our life are the source of our temptations. We tend to externalize temptations and make them about behavior. Behavior is important but the real temptations are from within us, not around us. We are either tempted to believe that we are more than or less than the dust of God's creation or we are tempted to not trust God's willingness to get his hands dirty in the dust of who we are. The temptations are not finally about our behavior, breaking rules, or being bad. God does not tempt us to see if we will pass or fail. The temptations are for our benefit, not God's. They are a part of our salvation. We leave home and experience wilderness temptations to discover that our most authentic identity is as a beloved child of God and our only real home is with God.

The wilderness is new territory for us. In the wilderness the old structures, the ones we left behind, no longer contain, support, or define our life. It is not, however, uncharted territory. The way has already been cleared by Jesus. It is the way home, the way to God. We go to the wilderness with the knowledge and confidence that Christ has gone before us. Leaving home is not so much a loss for us but an opportunity for God. In the wilderness our illusions of self-sufficiency become surrender to God, our helplessness opens us to God's grace, and our guilt is overcome by God's compassion. That's what happens when you leave home. We can never escape or avoid the wilderness. Like Jesus, we must go through it. We must face the temptations of Satan and be with the wild beasts. Yet we never go alone. The angels that ministered to Jesus will be there for us. "Remember who you are," is their message. "You are a beloved son of God. You are a beloved daughter of God. You are one with whom he is well pleased." Over and over, they tell us. They remind us. They encourage and reassure us.

With each remembrance of who we are the demons are banished. With each remembrance of who we are we overcome Satan's temptations. With each remembrance of who we are we take another step toward God. That is the way through the wildernesses of life. Remembrance after remembrance. Step after step. "I am a beloved child of God. With me he is well pleased." Let that become our wilderness mantra. Let those words fill our minds, cross our lips, and occupy our hearts. The truth of those words is the way home. **Amen.**

1 LENT                    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

2 LENT                    10:15 AM                    HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II                    (also on zoom)  
COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Roe Prosser	Deb Giordano
Coffee	Janet Croft	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:

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 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