

Church of the Divine Love

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – PROPER 7

JUNE 25, 2023 9:00 A.M.

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

Prayer before worship – on insert

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn **#372 – Praise to the living God!**

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria (sung) page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Jeremiah 20:7-13**

Psalm 69:8-11, (12-17), 18-20

Second Lesson: **Romans 6:1b-11**

Gradual Hymn **#439 – What wondrous love is this**

Gospel: **Matthew 10:24-39**

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 **#657 – Love divine, all loves excelling**

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:

Eucharistic Prayer B page 367

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 #691 – **My faith looks up to thee**

Post Communion Prayer page 365

Prayer for Peace – on insert

Prayer of St. Francis page 833

Dismissal Hymn #693, vs. 1-4 – **Just as I am**

Dismissal

Sermon Sunday June 25, 2023

Genesis 21:8-21; Psalm 86:1-10,16-17; Romans 6:1b-11; Matthew 10:24-39.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

Who would you be if you ever became fully yourself? What new possibilities might arise? How would your relationships change? What fears would disappear? How do you imagine your life would be different? I’m not talking about a selfish attitude toward others and the world. I am talking about living into our better and truer selves, being real and authentic, experiencing wholeness and integrity within ourselves; and then taking all of that, all that we are and all that we have, and offering it to our relationships, to the world, to Christ.

Who would you be if you ever became fully yourself? I think that’s the question that lies beneath today’s gospel and I think it points to something we all long for and struggle with. The year I was in the fourth grade my dad was in Republic Dominican. I don’t remember what I had done or said but it was enough that my sister asked my mom, What’s wrong with Peter? I suspect she asked it more out of frustration than concern. My mom could see what I could not yet see for myself. She said, He’s trying to be a man

but he's not yet a man and he's no longer just a little boy. He's trying to grow up. Do you remember what it was like growing up: the questions, the struggles, the fears, the hopes, the dreams, the failures and doubts, the relationships? I remember it as clearly as if it was yesterday. Do you know why? Because it was yesterday and it is today. Growing up isn't about only kids. It's a lifelong process and growing up at any age, at every age, is just hard work. I think that's what Jesus is getting at in today's gospel.

We often hear the gospel as a prescribed set of beliefs, teachings, and behaviors, but what if there is more to the gospel, more to life, and more to you and me than that? What if the gospel is a path toward becoming more fully ourselves and Jesus is a symbol of what that fullness looks like? That path, however, is not necessarily easy or comfortable. Today's gospel is one of Jesus' hard sayings and we must be careful not to literalize it. "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one's foes will be members of one's own household. The sword Jesus brings is the sword of separation. It is neither a rejection of family and relationships nor is it destructive of life. Rather, Jesus' sword of separation is generative of life and relationships. It unbinds, frees, and brings about the separateness necessary for growing up and finding life. "Those who find their life will lose it," Jesus says, "and those who lose their life for my sake" – those who separate from their old life and ways – "will find it" (Matthew 10:39). Separation is necessary for the creation of life and for that life to grow; whether it is physical, emotional, or spiritual. It is at the heart of our growing up and becoming more fully ourselves. Let me give you a few examples of what I am talking about. As told in Genesis 1, the act of creation is also an act of separation. In the beginning God separates the light from the darkness and later, the day from the night.

Biologists tell us that reproduction and growth are processes of cells dividing and separating. The day you were born you separated from your mother's womb, a first and necessary step in becoming more fully yourself. How old were you when you realized that at least some of your parents' ideas, beliefs, and ways were not your own? That was about your separation and growing up. Do you remember what adolescence was like? Yours? Your child's? The struggles and conflicts, the restlessness, and the changes were a form of separation and another step in growing up. Moving out of your parents' home to begin work or to go to school is a separation by which you sought to become more fully yourself. The significant transitions in our lives – birth, marriage, divorce, a new job, retirement, and even death – are about the separation that takes us to a new life, even when painful or unwanted.

Matthew got up and left his tax booth in order to follow Jesus (Matthew 9:9). James and John separated from their father, their boat, and nets to become followers of Jesus (Matthew 4:21-22; Mark 1:19). Two disciples left John the Baptist and followed Jesus (John 1:35-37). They all chose a path of becoming more fully themselves. That's what discipleship is about. Jesus himself chose separation. When he was twelve years old, he separated himself from Mary and Joseph to stay behind and remain in his father's house.

At the end of that story Luke comments, “And Jesus increased in wisdom and years, and in divine and human favor” (Luke 2:52). Separateness is the freedom to think our own thoughts, hear our own voices, discern our own concerns, establish our own values, and chart our own life’s path. As Christians we have chosen to do that in relationship with Christ. It means discovering for ourselves our lacks and limitations, our strengths and gifts, our hopes and dreams, our questions and our answers.

So let me ask you again. Who would you be if you ever became fully yourself, if you lived into God’s dream for you and your life? From whom or what do you need to separate, not as a rejection of them but as a reclaiming of yourself? Is it a particular person, a voice or experience from the past, a fear? What do you need to let go of, to separate from, in order to grow up and come alive? For most of us at some level this is about parental and authority figures, those, as Jesus points out in today’s gospel, who are closest to us, members of one’s own household (Matthew 10:36). But it could also be about institutions, a political party, our country, even the Church. Jesus is not asking us to abandon our relationships but to reorient our lives, to become more fully ourselves, and to find our life and identity in him. And that raises a question for me. Might the sword of separation need to be applied to our relationship with God and Jesus? If separation is the beginning of growth and the basis of new life then the answer has to be yes. Yes, separation from God and Jesus is necessary to our spiritual life and growth. Again, this is not about rejection but about creating the freedom and space to allow a new understanding, a new relationship, a new God-image to arise within us.

Chances are you’ve already experienced aspects of this separation. Is your understanding of who God or Jesus is today the same as it was last year, five years ago, fifteen, twenty-five? Do you read and understand the Bible today the same way you did when you were a child? Do you still pray the same way you did a few years ago or when you were a child? Probably not. You’ve grown and changed. You separated from previous beliefs, understandings, and practices to claim new ones that reflect who you are today. And if your answer is, yes, it is the same today as it was back then, then maybe there’s a problem. Why has it not changed? What’s stunting your growth? From what do you need to separate?

This story shows that God’s grace is bigger than we can imagine. God’s faithfulness is worked out in ways we can’t anticipate, and over the lifelong process of becoming a disciple, we learn to trust God. Like the disciples, we are sometimes sent out on risky missions, warned and equipped to face the danger. Other times, like Hagar and Ishmael, we are cast out into the wilderness without any choice. But even there, we discover God’s grace goes before us. **Amen!**

4 PENTECOST	9:00 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II	(also on zoom)
	10:00 AM	VESTRY MEETING	
MONDAY	8:30 PM	AA MEETING	

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

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Deb Giordano	Roe Prosser

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
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Bob Curley	Arlene Goodenough	Art
Chris Dickson	Kate Jones	Deb P.
Michael Echevarria	John Rocco	Bethany
Barbara Stinson	Michael & Family	Warren
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
Celeste	Ciara	

All people and countries suffering from violence and hatred.

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

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

