

Church of the Divine Love

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

MAY 21, 2023 10:15 A.M.

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

Prayer before worship – on insert

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn **#495 – Hail, thou once despised Jesus!**

Opening Acclamation for Easter page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria (sung) page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Acts 1:6-14**

Psalm 68:1-10, 33-36

Second Lesson: **1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11**

Gradual Hymn **#494 – Crown him with many crowns**

Gospel: **John 17:1-11**

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze (printed on insert)

Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, Form IV page 388

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn **#460 – Alleluia! sing to Jesus!**

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 #483 – **The head that once was crowned with thorns**

Post Communion Prayer page 365

Prayer for Peace – on insert

Prayer of St. Francis page 833

Dismissal Hymn #562 – **Onward Christian soldiers**

Sermon Sunday May 21, 2023

Acts 1:6-14; Psalm 68:1-10,33-36; 1 Peter 4:12-14,5:6-11; John 17:1-11

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

In today's gospel Jesus is praying. He's not talking to the disciples and he's not talking to us. He's not teaching and he's not giving instructions. He's praying, and we're listening in. And what a prayer it is. What do you hear in his prayer? I'm not just asking about what he prays for. I'm asking about what's behind his prayer. What's going on in him? What's his prayer really about?

I ask those questions because one of the things I know about prayer is that we never simply offer our words. Instead, our words are an offering of ourselves and the circumstances of our lives. There's always more going on than the words we say. They are just the tip of the iceberg, an outward and audible sign of some inner stuff. And I think that's true for Jesus in today's gospel. It's the night of the last supper. Jesus has washed the disciples' feet. A final meal has been shared. He's told them he's leaving. The end is near. Judas left the table and went out into the night. According to John, Jesus is "troubled in spirit." He knows his friends will abandon him. "You will leave me alone," he tells them. Peter will deny him three times. Thomas doesn't know the way. Philip wants to see the father. And Jesus feels the world's hate.

No wonder Jesus' prayer is rambling and circuitous, confusing, repetitious, and hard to understand. I suspect that's less about the prayer and more about what's going on in Jesus. Haven't you had times like that? Haven't there been times when your prayer was rambling and unclear, back and forth, contradictory, moving all over the place like those little crazy ants on the kitchen counter. I think that happens on those nights when it seems everything is on the line and we can't tell if things are falling into

place or falling apart. They are those circumstances that call everything into question. They are times when we wonder what we've really accomplished. Did we make a difference? Was it worth it? What's my life really about? They are times when we are overwhelmed by joy or devastated by loss and grief. They are those times when we're trying to get clarity about ourselves and come to terms with our life. Who are we? What do we do now? Do we have what it takes? They are the transition points, thresholds moments, and circumstances when we're trying to make sense of ourselves and our life. We're working out our life and struggling to be authentic, faithful, and whole.

I think that's what we see and hear in Jesus' prayer today. He's not as different from us as we often think or sometimes want him to be. Today we see the human Jesus standing in solidarity with us and our humanity. Today we see the human Jesus working out his life. And who here today doesn't know what that's like? So, tell me this. What are you working out and struggling with today? And what is your prayer in all that? I can't tell you what to do. I don't have your answers. But maybe today's gospel offers a way forward. What strikes me in today's gospel is not what Jesus does, but what he doesn't do. He doesn't isolate or close in on himself. He doesn't get angry or resentful. He doesn't resist or fight back. He doesn't run away or try to escape. He doesn't complain about or deny the reality of what is happening. He doesn't blame others. He doesn't give up. And he doesn't search for an answer to fix it all.

Instead, he faces his life. He's doing his own inner work. He acknowledges what has happened. He names his reality. He stays in touch with his humanity. He speaks from the heart. He feels what he feels. He grieves. He weeps. He gathers with his friends. He's concerned for others. He prays. He lives – and dies – with an openness to a future he cannot control. Three times he asks our father that we would all become one as he and the father are one. If Jesus is praying for our oneness, then he is also recognizing and rejecting the boundaries and differences that divide us. There are divisions within ourselves, our families, our churches, our nation. We live in a world full of divisions – male or female; rich or poor; gay or straight; Hispanic or Anglo; Christian or Muslim; conservative or liberal; educated or uneducated; young or old; heaven or earth; divine or human; sinner or saved; orthodox or heretic. We could go on and on listing the boundaries that we encounter and all too often establish or promote. They are not just divisions they have become oppositions. These divisions exist not only out there in the world but primarily and first in the human heart. We project onto the world our fragmented lives.

For every boundary we establish there is a human being. Ultimately, boundaries and differences are not about issues. They are about real people, with names, lives, joys, sorrows, concerns, and needs just like us. I think we sometimes forget or ignore this. It is easier to deal with an issue than a real person. Whether or not we admit it the boundaries we establish and enforce are usually done in such a way as to favor us; to make us feel ok, to reassure us that we are right and in control, chosen and desired, seen and recognized, approved of and accepted. In order for me to win someone must lose, in order for me to be included someone must be excluded otherwise winning and being included mean nothing. The

divisions of our lives in some way become self-perpetuating. We often deal with the boundaries and differences that divide us by writing agreements, covenants, treaties, and legislation that govern how we will get along with each other and behave in the midst of our differences. But that is not Jesus' prayer.

Jesus does not pray for our tolerance, our getting along, or just being nice to each other. He does not even pray that our differences would be eliminated. Instead, he prays for our oneness. He prays that we would be one as he and the Father are one so that our oneness would be the revelation of God's presence to the world. Oneness in the midst of difference becomes a sacramental presence of God's life in the world. God calls all of us for being an instrument of grace and hope in the world. That does not mean, however, that we lose our identity or individuality. Jesus does not stop being Jesus and the Father stop being the Father because they are one. Oneness is less about numbers and quantity and more qualitative. Jesus and the Father are one because they love and give themselves to each other. Oneness is a quality of life – God's life. Jesus' prayer for oneness is ultimately that we would be and live like God. Oneness is not about eliminating differences. It is about love. Love is the only thing that can ever overcome division. Over and over Jesus tells us that. Love God. Love your neighbor. Love yourself. Love your enemy. Our love for God, neighbor, self, and enemy reveals our oneness, and the measure of our oneness, our God-likeness, is love. In love there may be differences but there is no division.

God's love knows no boundaries. God loves male and female, rich and poor, gay and straight, Hispanic and Anglo. God loves Christian and Muslim, conservative and liberal, educated and uneducated. God loves young and old, heaven and earth, divine and human. God loves sinner and saved, orthodox and heretic. All are loved fully, completely, and uniquely as each need. God does not even draw boundaries between Jesus and us. If we think God loves Jesus more than anyone else, we have missed the point of the Gospel. God loves you the same as he loves Jesus. God loves your neighbor the same as he loves Jesus. God loves your enemy the same as he loves Jesus, because love is the way. **Amen!**

7 EASTER	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II	(also on zoom)
		COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS	
	11:15 AM	VESTRY MEETING	
MONDAY	8:30 PM	AA MEETING	
WEDNESDAY	7:00 PM	AL-ANON MEETING	

Grace Schinella	Lourdes S.	Kaylee
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
Ciara	Robert Sweat	Aidan
Sally & Roger	Sophia	Carol K.
Mary & Family	Christopher	Amy
Nathan Treadwell	Vincent	Tim
Judy	Celeste and Family	

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,

form 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

