

**Church of the Divine Love**  
**SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

**PROPER 20**

**SEPTEMBER 19, 2021**

**10:15 A.M.**

**HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II**

*Please observe silence after the candles are lit*

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn **#477 – All praise to thee**

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria (S-280 in hymnal) page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Jeremiah 11:18-20**

Psalm 54

Second Lesson: **James 3:13-4:3, 7-8a**

Gradual Hymn **#390 – Praise to the Lord**

Gospel: **Mark 9:30-37**

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze

Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, Form VI page 392

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn **#636, vs 1,2,4,5 – How firm a foundation**

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:	
Eucharistic Prayer A	page 361
Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal)	page 362
The Lord's Prayer	page 364
The Breaking of the Bread, Anthem & Prayer	page 337
The Communion of the People	
Communion Hymn – <b>#473, vs 1&amp;2 – Lift high the cross</b>	
Post Communion Prayer	page 365
Prayer of St. Francis	page 833
Dismissal Hymn <b>#414 – God, my King</b>	
Dismissal	

### **Sermon Sunday September 19, 2021**

Jeremiah 11: 18-20; Psalm 54; James 3:13-4: 3,7-8a; Mark 9: 30-37.

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

As we come to Mark 9, we find Jesus expressing yet another paradoxical way of thinking. He says that the way to greatness is the way of service. And if we want to be great, we need to be the greatest servants. And of course, this isn't simply something Jesus says, this is the way He lived. The life and the death of Jesus are the ultimate demonstrations of the greatness of humility.

If being great, holding the number one position, means being last of all and servant of all, then we have completely misunderstood what greatness is really about. And the disciples don't understand greatness any more than we do. What were you arguing about along the way?" Jesus asks them. "But they were silent for they had argued with one another who was the greatest." Jesus didn't get an answer to his question, only silence. It was the silence of having been caught, found out. Jesus isn't asking for his sake but for theirs. He seems to have already known what they were arguing about.

Their argument happened on a public road, out in the open. His question, however, is asked in the privacy and interior space of a house. This is about more than a change in physical location. Jesus is moving the conversation inward. He's not gathering information for himself but inviting the disciples' self-reflection on what it means to be great. He's presenting the disciples with an image and the reality of their better selves, and he's doing so for us too. Jesus is not saying that we should not or cannot be great. He never says that. Rather, he is asking us to reframe our understanding of greatness. What does it mean and look like for you and me to be great in today's world? That's the question.

Jesus answers that question by taking a little child in his arms and saying to the disciples, "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but

the one who sent me.” I want us to be careful here. Jesus does not say that greatness is in being a child and he doesn’t say that greatness is in being childlike. Greatness is in welcoming the child. Now that doesn’t sound too difficult or challenging. Who wouldn’t welcome a little child? But Jesus isn’t talking about the child. He’s talking about what the child represents. We’ve so romanticized and sentimentalized children and childhood in today’s culture that it can be difficult to understand what Jesus is getting at.

The child is a symbol for something else. The child is a symbol of vulnerability, powerlessness, and dependency. The child in Jesus’ day had no rights, no status, no economic value. The child was a consumer and not a producer. Greatness, Jesus says, is in welcoming and receiving into our arms one like this, regardless of his or her age.

Greatness is found not in what we have accomplished and gained for ourselves but in what we have done and given to “the least of these” (Mt. 25:40), the hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, and imprisoned; the symbolic children in each of our lives. Think about a family member or a nurse’s aide who bathes, changes, and cares for the elderly, the sick, the dying; she or he is a great one. Greatness never puts itself in a position of superiority over another. It is not about me, my nation, my tribe, my people, my religion, my politics, my bank account, my house, my job, my accomplishments, my reputation, my status. Our greatness is revealed in our service and care of others regardless of her or his ability or willingness to pay, repay, or return the favor. When Jesus talked about loving others even when they don’t love you (Lk. 6:32-34), doing good to those who do not do good to you, lending without expectation of repayment, and inviting to supper those who cannot invite you back (Lk. 14:12), he was describing greatness.

Greatness comes to us when we share with others who have nothing to share with us. Think of the young boy who shared his five loaves and two fish with 5000 people who contributed nothing but their hunger (Jn. 6:9). He was great. Greatness comes when we forgive one who has neither asked for our forgiveness nor changed his or her behavior. Those who refuse to carry bitterness or envy toward another are great. When we respond to the needs of others, when we refuse thoughts and actions of hatred or prejudice then greatness comes. When we overcome fear, tear down walls, and make room for one who is different, vulnerable, in need, then we are great. Greatness is not something to be achieved or earned. It is a quality that arises within us when our lives are in balance, and we step into our better selves. That’s the life Jesus offers us. That’s the life I want to live. I want to be great, don’t you? This kind of greatness happen in the simple, ordinary, and mundane. It often goes unnoticed and unnamed but it’s there. Greatness is always a choice set before us.

People of God’s Kingdom don’t live according to the rules of this world. They don’t define their values according to the rules of this world. For us as children and heirs of God everything is different. Death is life. Defeat is victory. Weakness is strength. For us the greatest power is found in the cross of Jesus. The greatest wisdom in the foolishness of the message of forgiveness. The greatness of a Christian is found in their humble service to others. To deny yourself is to find yourself. To take your cross is to find your happiness and fulfillment. This is the secret that the world in its futile attempts doesn’t know. Jesus changes our whole thinking. He helps to see things as God sees them. This is the true wisdom, as James, the brother of Jesus wrote in His letter. To see this world and our lives through the eyes of God. When we are not concerned with ourselves, with our greatness, we can have a proper focus. We can daily rejoice focusing on Jesus Christ. He has revealed His love to you.

He comes to you to deliver the forgiveness of your sins and to give you the gift of eternal life. He cares for you, in Him is your security and future. He is the meaning and purpose of your lives. He does it for you, so that you can freely serve others. When we pursue our greatness, it divides us. When we pursue the good and the salvation of others, it unites us. It restores, heals, and builds up the community, it helps the human community to flourish, and it helps the Kingdom of God to grow.

Always remember who you are. You are sons and daughters of the Triune God. You are heirs of God's Kingdom. You don't need to prove that you are the greatest. You already know it. Just live as who you are, trusting your God, serving your neighbors, and witnessing to them what our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has done for them. **Amen.**

#### 17 PENTECOST

10:15 AM      HOLY EUCHARIST, II      (also on zoom)

11:15 AM      VESTRY MEETING

#### MONDAY

8:00 AM      AA MEETING

#### WEDNESDAY

7:00 PM      AL-ANON MEETING

#### THURSDAY

10AM-2PM      THRIFT SHOP

8:00 PM      AA MEETING

#### SATURDAY

10AM-2PM      THRIFT SHOP

#### SUNDAY – 18 PENTECOST

10:15 AM      HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II      (also on zoom)

OUT-DOOR SERVICE AND PARISH PICNIC

Please bring side dish or dessert to share. Sign-up sheet at back of church

## PARISH PRAYER LIST

Give to all who suffer the refreshing waters of your compassion and healing. Make them dwell in the safety of your care even in the midst of all that troubles them. Especially we remember before you:

Girard Bishop	People of Haiti	Dorothy
Nathan Treadwell	John LoubengeigerDel	
Chris Dickson	Kate Jones	Julia
Michael Echevarria	John Rocco	James
Martinisi Family	Michael & Family	Warren
Charlotte H.	Bernie Walther	Sylvia
Mo (Rachael)	Bill Conklin Sr.	Laura
Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Taylor
Ciara	Gabriel	Aidan
Elodie	Victims of Natural Disasters	Victims of Terrorism
Edward Lent & Family	Christopher & Family	

Help us to speak words of encouragement and offer deeds of kindness to them. Bring us with them, into the unending joy of your kingdom. Amen

