

Church of the Divine Love
THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PROPER 16

AUGUST 22, 2021

9:00 A.M.

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

Please observe silence after the candles are lit

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn #561 – **Stand up, stand up, for Jesus**

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: **Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18**

Psalm 34:15-22

Second Lesson: **Ephesians 6:10-20**

Gradual Hymn #530 – **Spread, O spread, thou mighty word**

Gospel: **John 6:56-69**

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 #460 – Alleluia! Sing to Jesus! (vs. 1-4)

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 – **O How I Love Jesus** (extra verse on facing page)

Post Communion Prayer page 365

Prayer of St. Francis page 833

Dismissal Hymn #548 – **Soldiers of Christ**

Dismissal

Sermon Sunday August 22, 2021

Joshua 24:1-2a,14-18; Ephesians 6:10-20; John 6: 56-69.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

The Gospel passage we heard from John 6:56-69 a few minutes ago marks the end of the “bread of life” discourse that we have heard for the last several weeks. Jesus tells his followers that if they abide in him—that is, live in him and believe in him—he will always be with them. Jesus is the source of our life and our sustenance. We need to stay connected to him to be fruitful. Just as God gives Jesus’ life, Jesus in turn gives his followers eternal life if they believe in him.

The choice to accept Jesus is a difficult one. Godly people will still face difficulties in life, including persecution. God’s ways are not our ways, and that is why the Gospel message is hard to accept. It is costly because in order for us to accept Christ’s death and resurrection as the way to eternal life, we also have to experience our own form of death and resurrection. We have to die to our worldly way of life and rise to a new life in Christ. There are times when our faith in Christ will be harder than we expected. Each of us must answer the question, “Where can we go?” Jesus promises us eternal life. We face troubles in this life here on earth, but they pale in comparison to the joy of Christ revealed in us as mentioned in Romans 8:18.

Worldly life and godly life are always in conflict because they are so different. Worldly life always tempts us with the sinful desires of greed, envy, jealousy, sex, drugs, alcohol, and other things. The Christian life calls us to live godly lives now in exchange for a heavenly life later—even if our present worldly life is full of pain and persecution. Jesus wasn't interested in whether he was causing offense or not. That does not mean that he did not care for the people he was talking to. On the contrary, he deeply cared for them. Because he cared for them, he preferred to speak the truth instead of speaking what was pleasing. Jesus wanted his hearers to know that what he is saying is the truth, even though it is hard to hear.

Jesus did not try to talk unwilling disciples into staying with him, nor did he try to make things easier so that they would reconsider their relationship to him. He wants eager followers who understand the cost of following him. The Gospel message is not easy to hear and accept. The church is often tempted to soften the impact of the message by removing the offending parts or by preaching something similar to the Prosperity Gospel. Most people do not want to hear this message because it calls on them to change their way of life. It calls on them to give up the world's ways in favor of a life that will lead them to heaven. The truth is so confronting and so painful that we are often hell-bent on hanging on to our sinful way of life. That does not mean that everyone will refuse to accept the message. Some, like Peter and the disciples, realize that Jesus is the key to eternal life. In return, he will give us the strength we need to be strong in our walk of faith. That strength will mean taking a stand for Christ and being counted. It will make a difference both in us and in the lives of everyone we come into contact with.

The picture that this portion of John's Gospel paints is not a pretty one, but it is a realistic one, especially when our Christian walk of faith is difficult. The picture is also one of belief and faith, especially when we keep our eyes on Jesus. It produces love, joy, peace, hope and eternal life. The purpose of the Gospel message is not to convince detractors or turn the hearts of rebels. That is the job of the Holy Spirit. The Gospel message is the means by which our hearts respond to God. The disciples who left heard what Jesus said as a threat—a threat to their way of life, their accepted notions, and their grip on reality. Those who stayed heard what Jesus said as a challenge to their way of life, their accepted notions, and their grip on reality. The disciples who continued on with Jesus might not have completely understood what he said, just like sometimes we can't completely understand what he says. We, like the disciples, might not even be completely comfortable with it, but we are intrigued by what he said. In the Bible, faith is a verb. It is an action by which we consent and act. It is also a process. Peter and the others, like us, need it to grow stronger.

If the disciples—the great heroes of the faith—had doubts, it should not be surprising that we will have doubts. What we can do is embrace them and take them to the one best source for answers—Jesus. Jesus provides the spiritual power that we need in our lives. Without it, we will be overwhelmed by the spiritual and mental challenges we will face. We will be too tired to serve in ministry and will be too weak to engage in spiritual warfare. If we have faith in Jesus, we have to spread the Good News. We have to be public witnesses for Christ. Sometimes our witness will be in the form of words, but mostly it will take the form of our actions, especially the choices we make in life. If our actions, words, and deeds contradict our Christian faith, we are being hypocrites.

The Spirit brings forth spiritual fruit in us, equips and deploys us with gifts in service to others, and gives us strength to witness for Christ every day. Our thoughts, feelings, priorities, and daily practices are changed to match what Jesus would feel, think, and do if he was in our place. We become like Jesus and in turn we love and serve others as Jesus would. There will be times when our faith is tried and tested. At times like these we

must remember that to abandon the faith of Christ will lead to desolation, ruin, and death. We must fall back on our personal experience of a living God in which the truth is wrapped up and made flesh for our benefit.

When we come to the Lord's Table to take part in Holy Communion, we know that we draw near to Jesus when we eat the bread and drink the wine. We know and also understand that Christ lives in us in a new way, and that we abide in Christ, and he abides in us. The Holy Spirit gives us the assurance that we are believers. As Romans 8:16 says, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God". Only then can we have the inner conviction and witness of the Holy Spirit that we are children of God. Amen!

O How I Love Jesus

(extra verse between 4&5)

Leave no unguarded place, No weakness of the soul;

Take every virtue, ev'ry grace, And fortify the whole.

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|--------------|----------|-------------------------|----------------|
| 13 PENTECOST | 9:00 AM | HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II | (also on zoom) |
| 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 | |
| 14 PENTECOST | 9:00 AM | HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II | (also on zoom) |
| | 10:00 AM | VESTRY MEETING | |

SUPPORT THE FOOD DRIVE DROP-OFF IN THE KITCHEN

Prayer for Grace and Favor:

Dear God, we ask that you provide for our needs, we ask for your grace and favor. We pray for your blessings to cover us; we pray that you would help us to prosper and make every plan that you have birthed in our heart to succeed.

We pray that others would take notice of your goodness and could not help but say, “these are the ones that the Lord has blessed.” Shine your light in us, through us. May we make a difference in this world, for your glory and purposes. Set your way before us. May all your plans succeed. We may reflect your peace and hope to a world that so desperately needs your presence and healing. In Jesus Name, Amen.

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:

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|--------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Girard Bishop | People of Haiti | Dorothy |
| Nathan Treadwell | John Loubengeiger | Chris Dickson |
| Michael Echevarria | Francisco Febres | Del |
| Martinisi Family | Michael & Family | John Rocco |
| Charlotte H. | Bernie Walther | James |
| Julia | Mo (Rachael) | Warren |
| Bill Conklin Sr. | Anthony Paribello | Kate Jones |
| Barbara Curran | Edward Lent & family | Laura |
| Frances & Donna Mongelli | Christopher & his family | Aidan |
| Elodie | Taylor | Ciara |
| Gabriel | Victims of Wild Fires and Floods | |

The departed: Maxine Williams

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.