

Church of the Divine Love

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PROPER 20

SEPTEMBER 22, 2024 10:15 AM

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

Please observe silence

Prayer before worship – on insert

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn #

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria (sung)

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Wisdom of Solomon 1:16-21, 12-22**

Psalm 54

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

Gradual Hymn #

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

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

The Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, Form VI page 392

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn #

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:

Eucharistic Prayer B page 367

Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal) page 367

The Lord's Prayer page 364

The Breaking of the Bread, Anthem & Prayer page 337

The Communion of the People

Communion Hymn #

Post Communion Prayer page 365

Prayer for Peace – on insert

Prayer of St. Francis page 833

Dismissal Hymn #

Dismissal

Sermon Sunday September 22, 2024

Wisdom of Solomon 1:16-2:1, 12-22; Psalm 54; James 3: 13-4:3,7-8a; Mark 9:30-37.

Beloved in Christ,

“They had argued with one another who was the greatest.” We shouldn’t be too surprised. We’ve probably been a part of such arguments. From sibling rivalry to be mom and dad’s favorite, to the Syrian civil war, and everything in between greatness is a question with which we all live. It is one of the primary questions at the heart of our conflicts, injustices, anxieties, and insecurities. Whether we ask it aloud or silently to ourselves, we want to know, “Who is the greatest?”

Behind this question is a deeper issue. It is a question of space and place. Is there a place for me in this family? In this church? In this business? Is there a place for my religion, my politics, my race, my lifestyle in this society and culture? Is there a place for my people, tradition, and history in this land? Is there room for me? Individuals and groups alike struggle to establish and find a place. We live in a world in

which we are expected, taught, and encouraged to make a place for ourselves. If you want to survive you have to be a place-maker. Historically, the ones who have had a place are the ones who were greatest. Who are the greatest? How does the world measure greatness? Look at history, watch the news, study advertisements. The great ones are usually well educated, wealthy, and powerful. They have status, reputation, position, and possessions. They are the influential, popular, and beautiful. For most of history great ones have also been light skinned, male, and heterosexual. Finally, they are most always adults.

There is nothing inherently wrong with any of these things, until there is: until we use them to occupy a place to the exclusion of another, until we turn our gaze inward and no longer see our neighbor, until we, and not God, are at the center of our life and world. When those things happen, comparison and competition with and judgement of others become a way of life. Discrimination and violence become the means of dealing with difference. Those who might trespass, take our place, and invade our space are oppressed, marginalized, and evicted. We become needy, defensive, and anxious, wondering where, or even if, we fit in. The conflicts in our lives and in the world show us to be a people of place-makers arguing about who is the greatest. Despite our best efforts and despite what we might think, however, we never really make our own place in this world. We discover it as we create a place for others. That's what Jesus did. That's what he is teaching in today's gospel.

Christ himself is a place-maker but in a different way. He enters this world not seeking to make a space and place for himself, but for us. His place-making is for others and not himself. Christ's way of place-making is the story of the cross. It's the meaning of being "last of all and servant of all." It's the reason he took a little child into his arms. That little child represents the least, the last, and the lost. That little child is not the representation of purity, innocence, perfection, or humility. Those are our modern projections, sweet sentimentalities mostly. In Jesus' day children were insignificant, at the bottom of the social and economic structures. They were usually powerless and poor, and often hungry and sick. They had no standing or value until they were old enough to work, bring honor to the family, and care for their aging parents. The child in Jesus' arms is the very opposite of greatness. That's the point. Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."

Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." That's how Jesus understands greatness. Last place? Really? I don't think I've ever argued about or striven to be in last place. Have you? Last place is the last place I want to be and I suspect that's true for you too. What if greatness in Jesus' mind is not about how much we have or what we have accomplished, but about what we've offered and done for others? What if greatness is not about the position or place, we occupy, but about the space and place we offer others? What if we stopped arguing about and striving to be the greatest, and we sought to discover or recover and bring out the best in ourselves and each other? What would that look like in your life today?

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. Our refusal to objectify the opposite sex or to join in jokes about minorities or foreigners is an act of greatness. 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. 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.

Jesus opens himself to the children of the world, the least of the least. He shuns greatness and chooses to be last of all, servant of all. He claims nothing for himself and offers everything for others. Jesus hides amongst the children. He makes himself the least of the least, like a little child, so that when we welcome and receive into our arms the children of this world, we receive him. As we make space and place for others, we open ourselves not just to the other but to Christ and the Father. The truth is we are all place-makers. There's just one question. Are we working to make a place for ourselves or are we creating a place for others? It's a choice between the world's greatness and the children of God. That question is answered every day in our homes and businesses, in our schools, during our errands around town, and in our conversations about others.

Jesus is always naming and calling forth the best in us. For God's sake, for the sake of the world, for the sake of ourselves and one another, let's stop arguing about who is the greatest. If you were to be the best person someone has ever met, what would you want them to say about you? What qualities or characteristics would you want them to describe? Pick a couple things or ways you would want to be. How are you going to become that? What parts of your life need strengthening in order to become that and what parts need changing in order to become that? If you want a place in this life, create one for another. If you wonder whether you fit in, help another fit in. If you want to know if there is room for you, begin by making space for another. Open yourself to a child, receive Christ, receive the Father, and discover there is already space and place enough for everyone. That space and place is called the heart of God. **Amen.**

248th Diocesan Convention will be held November 8, 2024 Delegate needed.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 20

	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	
SATURDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP	

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 21

	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II	(also on zoom)
		COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS	
	11:15 AM	VESTRY MEETING	

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Anthony Giordano	Jess Berbeck
Coffee	Janet Croft	Prossers

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:

Sister Eddie	Betty Curley	Jess
Bob Curley	Steve Curley	Art
Chris Dickson	Donna Buchsbaum	Deb P.

John Mulligan	Don Edwards	Evelyn
Manetta Family	Robert Hosey	Kristen
Christopher	Bernie Walther	Celeste
Danielle	Phil Ryder	Warren
Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Del
Donna A.	Kate Jones	Aidan
Sally & Roger	Sophia	Ciara
Mary & Family	Ann Turco	Jan
Nathan Treadwell	Gladys Hadija	Vincent
Michael & Family	Matthew Treasure	Mo
Michelle & Baby	Marjorie Guerrier	Joseph

John Rocco

All people and countries suffering from violence, hatred and natural disaster.

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.

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

