

Church of the Divine Love
TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
AUGUST 20, 2023 9:00 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) page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Isaiah 56:1, 6-8**

Psalm 67

Second Lesson: **Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32**

Gradual Hymn #

Gospel: **Matthew 15:(10-20), 21-28**

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 A page 361

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 #

Post Communion Prayer page 365

Prayer for Peace – on insert

Prayer of St. Francis page 833

Dismissal Hymn –

Dismissal

Sermon Sunday August 20, 2013

Isaiah 56:1,6-8; Psalm 67; Romans 11:1-2a,29-32; Matthew 15:(10-20),21-28.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

“Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so. Little ones to him belong. They are weak but he is strong. Yes, Jesus loves me.” Most of us know that song well. For many of us it describes the Jesus of our childhood, the Jesus of our growing up. It's simple. It's easy. It conjures up images of a sentimental faith and a sweet, cuddly Jesus. Those are images many still cling to. That's how we want the world to be, the way we want to live, and who we want Jesus to be. The problem is that that kind of faith encourages a naiveté about God, life, and the world.

Look at the pictures of the Somalian famine. Listen to our politicians. Calculate the cost of our wars. Study history. Walk amongst our guests at the food pantry. Talk with a cancer patient, their surviving spouse, or the alcoholic struggling to get well. Balance the family budget, work full time, raise your kids, be faithful in your marriage, and while you are at it remember to eat well and exercise. We all know what it's like. We've each got our own story. We need a faith that can carry us through this life. Too often a sentimental faith becomes cynicism, causes us to turn away from our difficulties, or leaves us feeling paralyzed. Life is neither simple nor easy. So why should we settle for a faith that is? We've all grown up since the days of singing "Jesus love me" but has our faith grown up? Yes, Jesus loves us but faith is not about sentimentality and Jesus is not always soft and cuddly. Just ask the Canaanite women in today's gospel. She'll tell you all about it. She's not one of the chosen people. She's an outsider that the insiders don't want to be around. When we were kids, we would say she's got cooties. There's just something about her that is not acceptable. On top of that she is a woman in a society in which women have no real value or standing. To make matters worse she's a screamer with a crazy kid.

Life for her is neither simple nor easy. Sentimentality won't cut it. She needs help so she comes to Jesus. Yes, Jesus loves her but he ignores her and then calls her a dog. So, what do we do with that? Many have tried to explain it away. They offer excuses trying to justify Jesus' behavior. None are really convincing. Maybe Jesus was just tired and having a bad day. Or he was teaching his disciples something. Really? At the expense of this woman and her daughter? Others say Jesus was testing her faith; as if her life was not enough of a test. Maybe Jesus didn't understand the full extent of his mission and ministry. I suspect all the many excuses only highlight how embarrassed we are by this text. Regardless of why Jesus did what he did we don't like it. It makes us uncomfortable. That's not the Jesus we want but that's the Jesus we get in today's gospel. And sometimes that's the Jesus we get in life.

There are days that we pray and get no answer. We come before God and offer all that we are and all that we have. We speak our words, express our feelings, make known our needs and nothing happens. We wait. We listen. God is silent. It's like talking to the walls of our room. If you have ever felt that way then you know this Canaanite woman. "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." But he did not answer her at all. Instead, he talked about her to the disciples. She heard every word. "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," Jesus tells them. For her, however, there are no words, no gestures, no acknowledgment, no explanation. Nothing at all. What do we do when that happens? Where do we go? Do give up? Get mad? Quit the church? Sometimes someone will come to me and ask, "Why? Why is God silent? Why am I ignored?" I wish I knew. I don't have an answer. Even if I did, I doubt it would be satisfactory. So, I do the only thing I can do. I send them back. Go pray, I say. Just show up. Regardless of what God does or does not do you show up. Even if it seems God does not. That's what the Canaanite woman did.

Jesus was silent. She could have gone home, argued, or asked, why? But she didn't. Instead, she came closer to Jesus, fell before him, and kept on worshipping him saying, "Lord, help me." That doesn't make

sense but that's what she does. This woman who was ignored and seemingly rejected by Jesus moves even closer, entering deeper into his silence, and begs like a dog. She continues to show up trusting that somehow it is enough to just be there before him. At some point he has to act. She doesn't know when or what he will do. She only knows that she will be there when he does do something. This time he answers. "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." He called her a dog, an animal. Those words sound so harsh, so mean, so wrong. They are. But maybe they are not about Jesus or the woman. Jesus is naming the reality of the world in which they both live. The reality is that there are children and there are dogs. We see it every day. Some have while many do not. Some are in and others are out. For some life flourishes. Others struggle to make it another day. Children and dogs.

They did not make it that way. It was like that before either one of them were born. It was that way before they met and it is still that way today. That doesn't make it right and we should do all we can to change it. However, that is the world in which we must pray, the world in which we must live our faith, the world in which we must learn to show up. That's the world in which Jesus and these Canaanite women meet. Life is neither simple nor easy and dogs don't eat the children's food in this world. The woman knows this. She even agrees with Jesus. "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." She has again found a way to show up and be present even when it seems everyone and everything is against her. This time Jesus speaks and acts. "Great is your faith," he tells her. That very hour her daughter is healed.

So, what do we do with that? Some say she finally wore him down and Jesus relented to get her to be quiet and go away. That sounds more like what we do. Some say she was rewarded for her persistence. Maybe, but you and I both know of persistence that did not get rewarded. So, what's the difference? Others suggest Jesus realized he was wrong and changed his mind. Perhaps. I don't know why Jesus acted the way he did. Maybe we don't need to know. Maybe this story is not even about Jesus. It's about us, our faith, and our world. Life is difficult. Deep abiding faith is a real struggle. The world is broken and divided into children and dogs. In the dog days of life all we can do is continue to show up and that's enough. God may or may not do what we want. It doesn't really matter. To not show up is to only deepen the divide. To turn away means that we won't be there when God does act. We will miss it. We will miss the moment of healing, the words of forgiveness, the acts that transform. We will never know that Jesus really does love us. Her begging was a persistent insistence on being included in the love and grace and mercy offered by Jesus Christ. That must be the root of all of our approaches as well. We have to live and love and show up and speak out and advocate for just and equitable ways of living together, for we belong to God and we belong to each other. May we be as brave and persistent and fierce as this woman and her daughter. **Amen!**

12 PENTECOST 9:00 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II (also o zoom)

MONDAY 8:30 PM AA MEETING

WEDNESDAY 7:00 PM AL-ANON

THURSDAY 10AM-2PM THRIFT SHOP

8:30 PM AA MEETING

SATURDAY 10AM-2PM THRIFT SHOP

13 PENTECOST 9:00 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II (also on zoom)

10:00 AM VESTRY MEETING

Today Next Week

Eucharistic Minister Roe Prosser Deb Giordano

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
Bob Curley	Arlene Goodenough	Art
Chris Dickson	Kate Jones	Deb P.
Michael Echevarria	John Rocco	Bethany
Michael & Family	Warren	Dennis
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
Joan Blan	Celeste	Ciara
Margaret G. and Baby		

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

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 forever. Amen

