

Church of the divine Love
PROPER 22
OCTOBER 6, 2024 10:15 AM
HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

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: **Genesis 2:18-24**

Psalm 8

Second Lesson: **Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12**

Gradual Hymn

Gospel: **Mark 10:2-16**

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

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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
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Dismissal Hymn	

Sermon Sunday October 6, 2024

Genesis 2: 18-24; Psalm 8; Hebrews 1: 1-4; 2:5-12; Mark 10: 2-16.

Beloved in Christ,

“Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” Divorce is a question that affects all of us. Some of us have dealt with it in our own lives and marriages. Some of us have known the pain of our parents’ or child’s divorce. All of us, I suspect, know someone who is divorced or has been affected by divorce. It is a reality of our lives and our world. Sometimes divorce is necessary. Other times it comes too quickly and too easily, an escape from the hard work of being in relationship. Always, it is a spiritual and emotional tragedy with profound and lasting consequences for all involved.

The Pharisees’ question, however, is not a pastoral question. It is a legal question, a test. Marriage in first century Palestine was an arrangement between families not a choice between individuals. It was more about an exchange of property, the woman, than it was about romance, mutuality, or personal fulfillment. In asking their question the Pharisees are not concerned about a woman in an abusive or dangerous situation. They aren’t asking about a young couple who through illusion, immaturity, or naiveté made a mistake in choosing to marry. They are not dealing with a marriage that has become spiritually dead, not only devoid of but destructive of life. They are not worried about the spiritual or emotional well-being of the couple. Their concern is Jesus. They have been plotting “how they might destroy him” (**Mark 3:6**) ever since he and his disciple broke the law by plucking grain (**Mark 2:23-24**) and healing (**Mark 3:1-5**) on the Sabbath.

The Pharisees already know the answer to the question they are asking. "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her," they answer Jesus. In their day marriage and divorce were the prerogative of men. Women neither married nor divorced. They were the objects and sometimes the victims of marriage and divorce. The Pharisees are not really concerned about marriage or divorce. They are more interested in Jesus' answer. They are testing Jesus. Will he follow or reject the law of Moses? That is the context for today's gospel. That is the context for Jesus' words and they are not easy words. That context is not, however, a reason to either dismiss or relativize what Jesus says. It is, rather, a reason to take seriously what he says and to be discerning in how we apply it, lest we become just like the Pharisees. They are not focusing on the spiritual or emotional well-being of the couple. They want to know Jesus' view on the state of the law. Is it lawful? Can this be done? Jesus is clear, however, that this isn't about the state of the law but the state of their hearts. The Pharisees tell Jesus that Moses allowed for a certificate of dismissal, a divorce. And that, Jesus says, was "because of the hardness of your heart."

Jesus neither accepts nor rejects the law of Moses. He reinterprets and deepens it. Marriage and divorce are not about transactions but about relationships, people, and God. He recognizes the law of Moses for what it is, a concession to hardness of heart. Divorce happens. You know that. I know that. The Pharisees know that. And Jesus knows that. Despite this, God's intention is that a husband and wife would become one flesh, that no one would separate them. Scripture and the Church view the marriage of husband and wife as representing the oneness of God and the union between God and humanity. That is why divorce is so spiritually painful and why Jesus seems so narrow and absolute in what he says.

The Pharisees want to talk about procedure. Jesus makes the conversation about substance. For the Pharisees the issue is the state of the law. For Jesus the issue is the state of one's heart. In that regard divorce is not limited to married persons. Divorce is an issue for everyone regardless of one's marital status. Divorce happens in all those relationships in which we or another have become hard hearted. Hardness of heart is not simply a marital issue. It is a spiritual issue. It separates humanity from divinity. It divides husbands and wives, parent and child, brother and sister, Republican and Democrat, liberal and conservative, black and white, rich and poor, Christian and Muslim, Palestinian and Israeli. Hard heartedness is not simply about having differences. It's about having no need of the other.

Divorce is a symptom of heart disease. Wherever there is division and separation there is hardness of heart, our own or another's. It is the reason the disciples tried to keep the children from Jesus. It is the reason the Pharisees could even ask their question to test Jesus. Before divorce ever happens between us it happens within us. We begin to live isolated, closed, and fragmented lives. We become fearful, defensive, and lonely. Let's not settle for a reconciliation of what has happened; either within ourselves or between each other. Reconciliation is nothing more than the final decree of divorce, the terms under which we agree to continue living unchanged, hard heartedly. It still leaves us divided and the two still have not become one flesh. We need the dawn of a new day, a new way, a new life. We need the possibility of the impossible. We need forgiveness. Reconciliation is a negotiation and settlement of the past. Forgiveness, however, releases us from the past. Forgiveness repairs the past not by undoing it, but by letting us step into a new day, a new way, a new life.

We can all give reasons for our many divorces. We can describe the fights, pain, fear, abuse, incompatibility, and differences of opinions, values, and dreams. We can name the failures and

disappointments. We can recall what she said or what he did. They are real but they only justify the legality of our divorce. The reasons leave us stuck. They offer neither life nor healing but only survival. God offers and desires more for us than mere survival. The life and healing we desire is found in living with a soft heart. That's a vulnerable and risky place to live. It's the place and way in which Christ lived.

As we examine and soften our hearts, we discover that we have become one flesh with God. God has joined us to himself and no one can separate what God has joined together. There is no divorce that can separate us from the love, life, and presence of God. Divine grace fills all our relationships. It deepens our gratitude and joy in the relationships that are most intimate and life-giving. It gives us courage and perseverance to work on the ones that are broken. It offers us wisdom and strength when it is necessary to find a holy life separate from another. In each of these relationships Christ opens his arms to us and invites us to receive his blessing.

The challenge of today's gospel is neither marriage nor divorce. It is the work of examining our own heart; to name the places of hardness, to be open and vulnerable, to be willing to change and be changed. And, just in case you didn't get it the first time around, listen up: If there's anyone here today who's laboring under the burden of guilt and shame because you're divorced, leave that burden behind you. Let God dispose of it, once and for all. And if you're still holding on to hurt and anger caused by a divorce, let go of that, as well. You've carried it long enough, and it won't do you any good to hold on to it any longer. In Christ, all is forgiven; all things are new. Let that be Good News for you this day and forevermore. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. **Amen.**

248th Diocesan Convention will be held November 8, 2024

Delegate needed.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 22

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

THURSDAY

10AM-2PM THRIFT SHOP

8:30 PM AA MEETING

SAURDAY

10AM-2PM THRIFT SHOP

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 23

10:15 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

(also on zoom)

COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS

	Today	Next Week	
Eucharistic Minister		Jess Berbeck	Deb Giordano
Coffee		Prossers	Jess Berbeck

SUPPORT THE FOOD PANTRY – DROP-OFF IN THE KITC

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COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS

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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

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COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Jess Berbeck	Deb Giordano
Coffee	Prossers	Jess Berbeck

SUPPORT THE FOOD PANTRY – DROP-OFF IN THE KITCHEN

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	Ryan
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 forever. Amen

