

**Church of the Divine Love**

**FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT**

**MARCH 19, 2023 10:15 A.M.**

**HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II**

*Please observe silence*

*Alleluias are omitted during Lent*

Prayer before worship – on insert

A PENITENTIAL ORDER

Processional Hymn **#493 – O for a thousand tongues to sing**

Opening Acclamation for Lent page 351

The Decalogue page 350

The Confession page 353

THE WORD OF GOD

Kyrie page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **1 Samuel 16:1-13**

Psalm 23

Second Lesson: **Ephesians 5:8-14**

Gradual Hymn **#143 – The glory of these forty days**

Gospel: **John 9:1-41**

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

Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, Form IV page 388

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn #440 – **Blessed Jesus, at thy word**

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:

Eucharistic Prayer A page 361

Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal) page 362

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 #465 – **Eternal light, shine in my heart**

Post Communion Prayer page 365

Prayer for Peace – on insert

Prayer of St. Francis page 833

Dismissal Hymn #690 – **Guide me, O thou great Jehovah**

Dismissal

**Sermon Sunday March 19, 2023**

1 Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 23; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41

**Sisters and brothers in Christ,**

Today I want to talk with you about Jesus as a prophet who comes for judgment and what that might mean for us. What does a prophetic Jesus have to say about you and me, our country, our world? What is his judgment?

Jesus as prophet and judgment get to the heart of the questions, I think many of us are asking today. In light of the Prophet Jesus and his judgment, what are we to make of what is happening with security, border control, healthcare, refugees, hunger, poverty, violence, and war? How are we to respond to these? What about our responsibility to one another? How might Jesus as prophet help us there? I think the Prophet Jesus and his judgment have something to say about what it means to be a neighbor, especially to those who differ from, frighten, or threaten us. I think the prophetic Jesus and his judgment have something to say about the difficult situation we’ve experienced; the loss and fragility of life. What are the values that guide our lives and decision making? What are faithful choices and how then are we to live? The one who comes for judgment guides our way.

We face these questions and issues as individuals, a nation, and a world. The scale might vary but the struggles are the same. Prophets and judgment tend to make us a bit uncomfortable. Prophets speak words we often do not want to hear. They show us truths we often do not want to see. They ask us to change. And judgment often leaves us thinking about wrong doing and punishment. Prophets generally do not work within the system, but often stand outside the system and work against the injustices and abuses perpetrated by the system. Prophets speak against that which diminishes human dignity and impoverishes life. Think, for example, of the prophetic work of Martin Luther King, Jr, in America, Gandhi in India, Archbishop Oscar Romero in El Salvador, or Archbishop Desmond Tutu in South Africa. They called the people of those times and places to see anew and live differently. Behind each of them stood the Prophet Jesus, and they made present his judgment.

On a smaller more personal scale think about the people who have spoken a difficult truth to you, called you to change, or offered you words of consolation and hope, and in so doing opened your eyes to a new life, a new seeing, a new understanding, a new faith. They too were prophets with whom Jesus stood. They too presented Jesus' judgment. We don't often think or speak of Jesus as a prophet and yet that's exactly how the man who has been given new sight sees Jesus. "He is a prophet," he tells the Pharisees. Jesus affirms the man's seeing. "I came into this world for judgment," he says. That's what prophets do. They open our eyes to see what is, and cast a vision of what might be. Their judgment stands in the gap of those two seeing. They call us back to our truer selves. Prophets remove the cataracts from our eyes. They offer us clarity and insight. They challenge us to not look on outward appearances, but to look deeper; to see as the Lord sees, and look on the heart of the person or situation (1 Samuel 16:7).

That's the judgment for which Jesus comes; that we might see the world, one another, and ourselves differently. The judgment for which Jesus comes into this world is not so much a judgment about good or bad, right or wrong, in or out, saved or damned. It is a judgment about our seeing. Today's gospel tells us the man born blind had his eyes opened, with the implication that they had been closed. This is not about physical sight. This is about spiritual seeing. Do we see with eyes opened or do we see with eyes closed? For most of us, I suspect, the answer is yes. Sometime we see with our eyes open and other times we see with our eyes closed.

When we live and see with our eyes closed, we withhold mercy, live in fear, let anger control our lives. When we are unforgiving of ourselves or another, we see with eyes closed. Sometimes we either refuse or are unable to see the pain or needs of another. We're too busy to respond, too important to deal with it, too afraid to risk it. In those times we see with closed eyes. When we love ourselves more than our neighbor, we are seeing with eyes closed, blind to the value of the other's life. When violence becomes our default response we are seeing with closed eyes. In all those and a thousand other ways we see with our eyes closed. We focus on the outward appearances but neither feel nor establish an inner connection with the person or situation. Other times we recognize the injustice of a situation, we feel the other's pain as our own, we see the needs and life of another as valuable and important as our own. In those times we are seeing with eyes open. When we offer peace, forgive, act with compassion we are seeing with eyes open.

Jesus did not say that he came into this world to make judgments, but "for judgment." His judgment is not a series of individual decisions. Rather, his very life and presence are the judgment. His Word is a judgment on our own words and the rhetoric of our leaders. His compassion is a judgment on our

indifference and apathy. His justice is a judgment on injustice. His nonviolence is a judgment on our violence. His mercy is a judgment on condemnation. His forgiveness is a judgment on guilt. His welcome is a judgment on exclusion. His hope is a judgment on despair. His reign is a judgment on the politics of the day. His seeing is a judgment on our blindness. His light is a judgment on darkness. His life of prayer is a judgment on our attempts at living self-sufficiently. His simplicity is a judgment on our overly busy and cluttered lives. His truth is a judgment on lies, falsehoods, and alternative facts. His wholeheartedness is a judgment on our fragmented and divided world. His self-surrender and crucifixion are a judgment on the powers that be. His resurrection is a judgment on death.

Everything about Jesus, his life, his words, his actions, are a judgment on our lives and world. That judgment offers us the chance to see as he sees, to live as he lives, and to be as he is. His judgment, however, is not an adjudication for the purpose of punishment. Rather, it is a diagnosis for the purpose of healing and life. Jesus always casts his judgment with an eye toward change and transformation. Its purpose is to show us the way, the truth, and the life. Jesus' judgment is not a once and forever judgment. It's conditional. It lasts only as long as we see with eyes closed. And there is no one as blind as the one who chooses not to see, who chooses to live and see with eyes closed. We need only look to the recent past to understand what happens when we see and live with eyes closed. Let's not be closed eyed people. Let's see with open eyes. Let's see the beauty, the hope, the goodness. Let's see the pain and disfigurement. Let's take it all in, and then, by God's grace, let's begin to close the gap between what is and what might be.

Then you will see. You will see yourself as God sees. And you will see each other as God sees. And you will see the world as God sees. And you will see your future full of hope, as God sees. In our gathering together, in our hearing of the Word, in our sharing a holy communion on this Sunday of Lent, we encounter the life-giving, healing presence of Christ, who washes away our darkness, and bathes us in the light of his love. **Amen!**

Easter flower memorial envelopes are at the back of the church.

Please clearly print the names of your loved ones you wish to memorialize and return by Sunday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Make checks payable to The Church of the Divine Love Altar Guild.

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

SUPPORT THE FOOD PANTRY – DROP OFF IN THE KITCHEN

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Anthony Giordano	Deb Giordano
Coffee Hour	Giordanos	Nolans

### 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:

Grace Schinella	Lourdes S.	Bob Curley
John Mulligan	Arlene Goodenough	Celeste
Chris Dickson	Kate Jones	Deb P.

Michael Echevarria	John Rocco	Gabriel
Barbara Stinson	Michael & Family	Warren
Charlotte H.	Bernie Walther	Anthony
Mo (Rachael)	Bill Conklin Sr.	Carolyn
Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Del
Ciara	Robert Sweat	Aidan
Sally & Roger	Sophia	Carol K.
People of Haiti	Christopher & Family	Julia
Mary & Family	People of Ukraine	Tim
Nathan Treadwell	Vincent	Art
Margaret	Kaylee	Judy
Phil Ryder		

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 for ever. Amen



