

Church of the Divine Love

LAST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

FEBRUARY 19, 2023 10:15 AM

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

THE WORD OF GOD

Prayer for the New Year – on insert

Processional Hymn #

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Exodus 24:12-18**

Psalm

Second Lesson: **2 Peter 1:16-21**

Gradual Hymn #

Gospel: **Matthew 17:1-9**

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 #

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:

Eucharistic Prayer D	page 372
Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal)	page 373
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 February 19, 2023

Exodus 24:12-18; Psalm 2 or 99; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Matthew 17:1-9.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

Listen to him. Be raised up. Do not be afraid. What if those words are holy wisdom for times of change? What if they are the means by which we step into our own transfiguration? Maybe it wasn't Jesus who changed on the mountaintop. Maybe it was Peter, James, and John. Maybe their eyes were opened and their seeing changed, so that everywhere they looked they saw Jesus himself alone. Maybe they saw Jesus for the first time as he had always been.

I suspect every one of you could tell stories about the changes you have experienced, the changes that are happening in your life right now, or the changes that you hope for or that you fear happening. How do we live in the midst of change? What handholds are there when it seems the world around us as well as within us is changing? I wonder if the disciples in today's gospel (Matthew 17:1-9) might be asking the same kind of questions, and if they too are feeling the wind of change blowing through their lives. Here's why I say that. Immediately before Jesus takes Peter, John, and James up the mountain he tells them and the others that he must suffer, die, and be resurrected on the third day. He will tell them this again after they come down from the mountain.

What happened on that mountain top took place between Jesus's two statements of impending change. Maybe that event, what we call the transfiguration, was about preparing and helping the disciples live through the coming change. Maybe the transfiguration story has something to teach and show us about how to live in the midst of change. Maybe that's why every year the transfiguration is the gospel we hear on the Last Sunday after the Epiphany, the Sunday before we enter the season of Lent, a season

that focuses on change. Change, whether on the mountain top of life or in the valley of the shadow of death is a reality for all of us. One of the things I am aware of the midst of change is how many voices begin to speak. Some are outside of me and some are from within. There are voice of commentators chattering about what is happening and what should be done, voices of judgment, voices of second guessing, voices of fear. There are voices of self-doubt, self-criticism, and all they would have, should have, and could have. Some voices tell us to run and hide, and others tell us to fight and resist. Some voices ask questions and want explanations. Other voices deny what is happening, blame, or declare it to be the end of the world.

So many voices cry out for attention. Not every voice, however, is helpful or worth listening to. Some voices may sound sweet but they are not good for us. The story of the transfiguration says there is only one voice to listen to. The voice of God speaks from the bright cloud overshadowing Peter, James, and, John, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him." What if in the midst of change we sought to hear and listen to that one voice, the voice of Christ? What if we kept our ears open to what he is saying in our life and world today? To let ourselves become aware of and attentive to what he is saying and doing, to let his concerns and desires become our concerns and desires, to let his way of engaging life and the world become our way of engaging life and the world. It would mean that whatever change comes upon us it does not have the final word. There is another voice. Jesus is always speaking a word larger and more powerful than all the other voices. In the midst of change Jesus speaks a word of life, a word of hope, a word of forgiveness, a word of mercy, a word of beauty, a word of generosity, a word of courage, a word of love, a word of healing. Jesus speaks a word to and for you and me. Are we listening to that word, to his voice?

I suspect we have all faced change that has caused us to stumble and fall, paralyzed us, or left us overwhelmed. Again, this is not about whether the change is perceived as good or bad. It's about regaining our balance and getting our feet back under us. It's about stepping into new life when we aren't sure what that looks like or if there really is a new life awaiting us. The three disciples, Matthew tells us, "Fell to the ground and were overcome by fear." Jesus touches them and says, "Get up." But it's more than just "get up." A more literal translation would be something like "be raised up," "be aroused from the sleep of death," or maybe even "be resurrected." The word Matthew uses here is the same verb he uses when Jesus heals the paralytic, telling him, "Stand up" (Mt. 9:6-7); Jesus takes the hand of dead daughter of the synagogue leader, "and the girl got up" (Mt. 9:25); Jesus instructs the twelve, "Raise the dead" (Mt. 10:8); Jesus foretells his own resurrection (Mt. 16:21); and the angel tells the women who come to Jesus' tomb, "He is not here for he has been raised, as he said" (Mt. 28:6).

Jesus comes to us in whatever circumstances of change we find ourselves, touches us, and says, "Get up, be raised" It's the promise that though life has changed, it has not ended. Somehow new life is hidden in the midst of change, even when cannot see it or do not believe it. God uses the changing circumstances of our lives and world to bring us into new life. I'm not suggesting that God directly causes change to come upon us. I'm suggesting that God never wastes a chance to draw forth new life. Most of us I suspect live with some level of fear. Change often brings about fear, the fear of losing what we love, value, and desire; and sometimes it's the fear that comes with getting what we want. In the midst of change Jesus says, "Do not be afraid." He speaks to the heart of the human condition. They are the words we need to hear when we are raised up and back on our feet.

His words do not magically eliminate our fear. Instead, they are the call to take a first step into a new and changed life despite our fear. They are the assurance, once again, that change, does not have the final word, Christ does. We are not called to be fearless but to be courageous in the midst of change and fear. I don't know what changes you are dealing with. Maybe it's in your marriage, or with you children. Maybe it's the death of a loved one. Maybe it's about your health, your age, your physical or mental well-being. Maybe it concerns your work, your job, your income. Maybe it's a dream or plans that didn't work out. Maybe life is going exactly like you want. Maybe you are on a road to recovery and well-being. Maybe everything has fallen in place and for the first time you felt alive.

No human beings forget God's glory and God's light when they are confronted with sin and darkness. One moment we are crying in delight, Let's stay like this forever, and the next, we are sure that the Light never shone upon us. It becomes so easy to blame God for all the ills of humanity. When Moses returns from the glory of his mountain, he is confronted with the perfidy of the people who have fashioned an idol. When Jesus returns to Jerusalem, he is confronted with condemnation by the people he had loved and abandonment by his friends.

Above all, we remember that Theophany did happen in the Incarnation and the Resurrection of Jesus. We hold on to that knowledge. We are not abandoned. Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. If that's true, and I believe it is, then it means that every change, whether good or bad, wanted or unwanted, joyful or sorrowful, is illumined with divine light and filled with God's presence. Listen to him. Be raised up. Do not be afraid. **Amen!**

LAST EPIPHANY	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II	(also on zoom)
MONDAY	8:00 PM	AA MEETING	
ASH WEDNESDAY	7:00 PM	HOLY EUCHARIST & IMPOSITION OF ASHES	
		AL-ANON MEETING	
THURSDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP	
	8:00 PM	AA MEETING	
SATURDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP	
1 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	Jess Berbeck	Prossers

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
Tor		

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

The departed: Pat Cody

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