

Church of the divine love
SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY
FEBRUARY 23, 2025 10:15 AM
HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

Please observe silence

A Morning Prayer – 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 45:3-11, 15**

Psalm 37:1-12, 41-42

Second Lesson: **1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50**

Gradual Hymn –

Gospel: **Luke 6:27-38**

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

The Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, Form IV page 388

The Confession of Sin page 360

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn –

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:

Eucharistic Prayer C page 369

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 For the Parish page 817

Prayer of St. Francis page 833

Dismissal Hymn –

Dismissal

Sermon Sunday February 23, 2025

Genesis 45:3-11,15; Psalm 37: 1-12, 41-42; 1 Corinthians 15:35-38,42-50; Luke 6:27-38.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

Have you ever ended a relationship, or refused to see or speak with someone, because he or she betrayed your confidence, spoke critically of your child or spouse, or didn't do what you thought should be done? From whom are you withholding forgiveness these days? When have you condemned or made a judgment about someone else's life and then enjoyed sharing the dirt with another? In what ways have you hit back with thoughts, words, or fists? Have you ever wanted to get even and hurt someone because they hurt you or someone you love?

Those, and a thousand others like them, are the real life struggles that today's gospel holds before us. I know what that struggle is like and I'll bet you do too. We've all been there. The world is complex.

Relationships are difficult. Life is fragile. That's why we need today's gospel. And that's why it matters. But it's not easy. I don't think Jesus intends his words to be a how to lesson. He's not telling us how to love, reconcile, forgive, be merciful, or offer generosity. That's ours to figure out, not his. His words are intended to stir thought, trouble sleep, and provide some wider perspective. He's not telling us what to see, he's teaching us how to see. He's not giving us the answers; he's inviting us to ask better questions. And that's what I want us to do. I want us to consider some questions about four themes that I think run through today's gospel: tension, behavior, choice, and pain.

We all live in that gap between today's gospel and our own patterns of thinking and behaving. We're always negotiating the distance between Jesus' teaching and the reality of our day-to-day life. Do you feel that tension in your life? In what ways does it come up for you? What parts of today's gospel conflict with and challenge your politics, your words and actions, the messages with which you grew up, the values that direct and drive your life? In each of our lives there are contradictions between who we say we are and who we show ourselves to be, between our beliefs and our actions, between our life in Christ and our life in the world. How are you holding that tension and which side is winning?

We often think of faith as being about what we believe, but what about our behavior? What if faith is about how we live? What if it's about doing the gospel? What if our behavior is an indicator of what we believe and who or what really matters to us? Look at your actions and listen to your words in light of today's gospel. What do you see? What do you hear? Where is there alignment and where is there misalignment? What consequences are your words and actions having on others? Is what you say and do congruent with today's gospel? What behaviors do you need to change or stop for the well-being of another or yourself? How might you better embody and align yourself with Jesus's words today? Do you want to? Why is becoming God's children the fruit of loving one's enemies? Because when we love our enemies, we are acting like our heavenly Father acts, who is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. We are to give others an experience of God's love by the way we treat them. We are to be merciful, just as your father is merciful.

Every day you and I make one of two choices. We either choose to be large or we choose to be small. And what we choose affects others. If we choose to be small, we will keep score, act with violence, seek retribution, and make our relationships conditioned on who the other is and what he or she does. If we choose to be large it will be in recognition that something other than security, protection, power, reciprocity, and balancing the books is seeking our attention and animating our life. It will call us to be less fearful, less suspicious, less anxious, and less needy. It changes our attitudes toward others. It creates space for others. Which are you choosing these days? Are your choices enlarging or diminishing your life? Are you choosing the large or the small? Are you choosing another or yourself? What would it look like in your life today to choose the large and live large? And what would that take?

One of the things I know is that the pain of the world is great. Everyone has a story of pain hidden behind the life she or he shows to the world. I can never really know what is going on in the life of

another. Maybe that's why Jesus tells us not to judge or condemn but to be forgiving. Maybe that's why Jesus tells us to love our enemies, do good to those who hate us, to bless those who curse us, and to pray for those who abuse us. Maybe that's why we are not to return violence for violence. Because we don't really know the other's story. That not knowing is why we must continue to hold the tension, pay attention to our behavior, and choose the large. You and I may not be able to diminish or take away the pain of the world but neither do we have to add to it. That's the bottom line for me in today's gospel. Are you and I adding to the pain of the world, to the life of another? And if we are, what needs to change? How can we do things differently? How might we stop? Will we stop?

Chances are there is someone in each of our lives who is hanging on by a thread; a family member, a friend, a colleague, a stranger, someone who is a fixture in our life or someone who is just passing through. Sometimes we know they are hanging on by a thread, other times we don't. They're in need of love, mercy and forgiveness, prayer, a blessing, compassion, generosity, the benefit of the doubt, an open heart and open hands. We all know what that's like, we've been there too. Jesus then teaches his disciples that the way we treat others is the way we ourselves will be treated: Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. If we do not hear and follow Jesus' instructions, instead of entering a new and deeper relationship with God we will experience what it is like to be treated as we treat others, in a judgmental and unforgiving manner.

Now, after originally telling the disciples not to act with the hope of reward, Jesus tells them that if they love their enemies their reward will be great. Give, and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. Those who become Jesus' disciples, who hear and follow his instructions, will be all the more open to receive God's bountiful love, love that God pours out even on our enemies.

Beloved in Christ, the call to love our enemies, to forgive generously, and to be merciful is not something we can achieve by our own strength; it requires the transformative power of the Holy Spirit. It invites us into a deeper relationship with Christ, who exemplified this love on the cross. Let's be the hands and feet of Jesus in a world that so desperately needs His love. Let us pray that God will empower us to embody this radical love, transforming our hearts and radiating His grace wherever we go. **Amen.**

All baptized Christians, regardless of age, are welcome to receive communion in the Episcopal Church.

7 EPIPHANY	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II
		COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS
	11:15 AM	VESTRY MEETING

MONDAY	8:30 PM	AA MEETING
TUESDAY	7:00 PM	BIBLE STUDY (held in the room across from the office)
WEDNESDAY	7:00 PM	AL-ANON MEETING
THURSDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP
	8:30 PM	AA MEETING
SATURDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP
LAST EPIPHANY	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Anthony Giordano	Dana Kenn
Coffee Hour	Dana Kenn	Janet Croft

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:

Jane Alva Quallo	Betty Curley	Jess
Bob Curley	Steve Curley	Art

Chris Dickson	John Rocco	Deb P.
John Mulligan	Marjorie Guerrier	Lynette
Manetta Family	Robert Hosey	Ryan
Sister Eddie	Bernie Walther	Celeste
Beverly Noel	Phil Ryder	Warren
Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Del
Donna Amundsen	Kate Jones	Aidan
Sally & Roger	Vincent & Barbara	Ciara
Mary & Family	Wendy	Jan
Nathan Treadwell	Gladys Hadija	Sophia
Michael & Family	Matthew Treasure	Mo
Michelle & Baby	Joseph	Annie
Jerry & Family	Shannon & Family	Donna A.
Christopher	Oitice Family	Kristen

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

The homeless and food insecure

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.

A Morning Prayer

Father in heaven, I stand ready to receive Your wisdom and guidance. In each decision, big or small, lead me to discern your will and to act accordingly. Help me to understand the depth of Your wisdom, finding guidance in Your word and through prayer. Teach me to be patient as I wait for Your direction, trusting that Your timing is perfect. May I navigate this day with the assurance that Your wisdom is a treasure far greater than any earthly knowledge. Guide my thoughts and actions, that they may be a reflection of Your discernment and love. In Your guidance, I find the path to a life of purpose and peace.

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

