

Church of the Divine Love
NOVEMBER 23, 2025 10:15 AM
HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

A Morning Prayer – on insert

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn - (see hymn board for all hymns)

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Gloria page 356

Collect page 236

First Lesson: **Jeremiah 23:1-6** (*pages 670 in the Bible*)

Psalm 46 page 649

Second Lesson: **Colossians 1:11-20** (*page 1026*)

Gradual Hymn

Gospel: **Luke 23:33-43** (*page 919*)

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze

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The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:

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Dismissal	

Sermon Sunday November 23rd, 2025

Jeremiah 23: 1-6; Psalm 46; Colossians 1: 11-20; Luke 23:33-43.

Beloved in Christ, it seems strange that on the last Sunday of the church year we are again watching Jesus on the cross. Most of us are probably starting to focus on the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Besides we've already heard the Good Friday story once this year and that's usually enough for most of us. Why do we need to hear it again?

Maybe we need to hear it again because the injustice and violence revealed in today's gospel are an everyday occurrence in our lives and the world. Maybe we need to hear it again because we too often and too easily ignore, accommodate, or participate in violence. Maybe we need to hear it again because, despite all that, today – the Feast of Christ King – reminds us that the reign of Christ, the way of Jesus, is nonviolent. What do you see as you watch Jesus on the cross? What feelings does it bring up in you? I've become more and more afraid of what I see as I watch Jesus on the cross. I watch him die. I watch them "cast lots to divide his clothing." I watch the leaders scoff at him, the soldiers mock him, and one of the criminals deride him. That's not, however, what most frightens me. What really frightens me is how Jesus responds to the injustice and violence.

Jesus forgives them. He does not scoff, mock, or deride. He does not judge or condemn them. He does not retaliate or seek revenge. He doesn't call them names. He doesn't yell at or cuss them. He doesn't express anger. He neither speaks nor acts with violence. He chooses to suffer violence and injustice rather than be their cause. Today's gospel holds before us the image of a nonviolent Jesus. That's what frightens me. Maybe it frightens you too. Maybe you and I should be afraid; not of Jesus, but of the violence within ourselves. If you and I claim to be Christians and to follow the way of Jesus, then we also are to become nonviolent in our thoughts, words, and actions. If nonviolence is the way of Jesus, then what does that mean for us and, for example, the war in Ukraine, the way we drive, or the words and tone we use on social media?

When I speak of violence I'm not talking only about wars and felony criminal kind of violence. I'm talking about all the ways we hurt ourselves and others physically, emotionally, or spiritually. I'm talking about the ways we diminish or negate the human dignity of ourselves and others by what we think, say, and do. I don't think nonviolence is something we achieve; it's a path we follow. Addressing violence in our lives and our world is a spiritual journey. It's something we grow into. It's not only about the violence we do to others, but also the violence we do to ourselves. Maybe that's where nonviolence must begin. Maybe the reason Jesus could be nonviolent toward others is because he was first nonviolent toward himself. Maybe the first step to addressing violence in our world today is to deal with the violence we inflict on ourselves. What violence are you inflicting on yourself today? Do you ever put yourself down, call yourself names, berate or ridicule yourself? What are the things, regrets, guilt, missed opportunities, with which you still beat yourself up? Are you denying yourself forgiveness? How do you feel about yourself, your life, body, and soul? In what ways are you hurting yourself physically, emotionally, or spiritually?

Can you give yourself a break and show yourself some compassion? What if you truly believed you are the beloved of God, a child with whom God is well pleased? What if you began listening to a voice of self-love rather than the self-critical voices? What would it be like to live with unconditional friendliness toward yourself? How might you start to make peace with yourself? Imagine if we let unconditional friendliness toward ourselves and peacemaking with ourselves be starting points for our relationships with others or, as Jesus puts it, loving our neighbors as ourselves. We might begin to recognize her or him to be as sacred as ourselves and his or her hopes and needs to be as valid and important as our own. We might feel less need to prove, defend, or justify ourselves. It might take our fear or anger down just a bit. If that were to happen, how might it change what we think, the words we choose, or the things we do?

The gospel of Christ is not Things happen. The gospel of Christ is God happens - God intervenes,

God remembers, God redeems, God raises up the lowly, God brings down the mighty. We act as though war is inevitable. But imagine - just imagine - if, at the first sign of invasion in Ukraine, the nations of the world had deployed not weapons but armies of unarmed human shields, men and women prepared to lay down their lives rather than take lives. Imagine a peaceable kingdom breaking into the war-torn world. Impossible? Yes - if the only kingdom you recognize is the kingdom of Caesar. But Paul announces another kingdom: "He is the image of the invisible God... in him all things hold together... and through him God was pleased to reconcile all things - making peace through the blood of his cross." Not through force. Not through domination. Not through "saving yourself." But through the blood of His cross. Christ's power is not the power of empire. It is the power that refuses to be like us. In the human jungle, the lion eats the lamb. But on Calvary, the Lamb of God is impaled on the wood of the cross - and still refuses to become a lion. "Father, forgive them," He says. The first word of the Kingdom is mercy.

For whatever we do to "the least of these," we do to Him. God has made our flesh His flesh, our wounds His wounds, our dying His dying. We know God only by attending to His sacramental presence in the flesh and blood of the other - friend, neighbor, stranger, and enemy. He does not meet us in our fantasies of power but in shared vulnerability. This is the image He seeks to restore in us. This is the true human being revealed in Him. Luke tells us that one criminal reviled Him, but the other saw what no one else could see. He recognized in the battered man beside him the true King and prayed one of Scripture's most desperate, most beautiful prayers: "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." And to this dying thief, Jesus speaks the royal decree of the Kingdom of Love: "Today you will be with me in paradise." Not because the thief saved himself but because he entrusted himself to the One who would not save Himself. This is the reign of Christ the King: Not domination, but communion. Not vengeance, but mercy. Not survival of the fittest, but resurrection of the broken.

Today is the Feast of Christ the King. Not Christ the Domineering One. Not Christ the Nationalist Mascot. Not Christ the Patron Saint of the Prosperous. Not Christ co-opted to justify cruelty or indifference. But Christ the Crucified. His throne was a cross. His crown was of thorns. His scepter was a fragile reed. His coronation procession was a march to Golgotha. And yet Paul proclaims that this crucified One is: "Before all things... the beginning... the firstborn from the dead... the One in whom all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell." If you want God, you must look at the broken man on the cross. If you want power, you must kneel before vulnerability. If you want to live, you must die with Him.

This feast invites us - no, commands us - to sever all false attachments or hold them loosely, and to cling to Christ alone. We do not live to save ourselves. We live to give ourselves away. This is

freedom. This is joy. This is the Kingdom breaking in. C.S. Lewis said it well: Christ demands not a portion of us but all of us, and in return gives not simply a new life, but His own life. Every morning the demands of the world rush upon us like wild beasts. The first work of discipleship is to push them back - just long enough to hear the voice of the King. To let His life in. To let His peace in. To let His kingdom take root inside us. Then the new creation begins to grow. Then Christ reigns - from the inside out. Then the world begins to change.

Jeremiah promised a day when God would raise up a righteous Branch who would execute justice and righteousness. Zechariah sang that God would guide our feet into the way of peace. Paul declared that Christ reconciles all things through His cross. Luke shows us the King enthroned on the cross, forgiving, redeeming, saving. This is the world God wants to build through us: A world where shepherds gather rather than scatter. A world where the oppressed are lifted up. A world where mercy reigns over judgment. A world where the Lamb transforms the lion. Such a world cannot be built by people trying to save themselves. It can only be built by people given away - poured out in love.

And so, my friends, the bliss we seek is this: Christ reigning from the inside out. Christ taking up residence in your heart. Christ shaping your courage, your politics, your economics, your compassion. Christ dismantling the jungle within and planting the garden again. Only lives lived this way - lives lived from the cross, lives poured out even unto death, lives that refuse the serpent's whisper "save yourself" - will cast out the powers that destroy life and crush the innocent. May God forgive us, may Christ renew us, and may the Spirit enable us to grow in Christ's love, mercy, and compassion for all persons, and all creation itself. **Amen.**

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

LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST/CHRIST THE KING

PROPER 29 10:15 AM

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS

Last day to bring in Christmas shoe boxes

MONDAY 8:00 PM

AA MEETING

TUESDAY

No Bible Study this Thanksgiving Week.

WEDNESDAY	7:00 PM	AL-ANON MEETING
THURSDAY		Thrift Shop Closed for Thanksgiving.
SATURDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP
		Annual Advent Sale Starts today.
24 PENTECOST - PROPER 29	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II
		COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS
		Vestry Meeting following the Service.

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Dana Kenn	Anthony Giordano
Coffee Hour	Nolans	Dave Treasure

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:

Barbara Curran	Betty Curley	Martin
Bob Curley	Steve Curley	Joseph

Chris Dickson	John Roccoo	Deb P.
John Mulligan	Marjorie Guerrier	Bobby
Scottie Credendino	Michael	Ryan
Sister Eddie	Bernie Walther	Celeste
Beverly Noel	Phil Ryder	Warren
Anthony Paribello	Jonathan	Del
Donna Amundsen	Kate Jones	Jan
Shannon & Family	Vincent & Barbara	Sandy
Mary & Family	Wendy	James
Gladys Hadija	Sophia	Aidan
Michael & Family	Brooke & Kylee	Mo
Michelle & Family	Christopher	Annie
Timothy Treasure	Donna A.	Aika
Moises Parra	Misael Varas	Jay

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 the 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 forever. Amen