

The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

12-13 September 2020

**The SERVICE of EVENING and MORNING PRAYER
with HOLY COMMUNION**

ANNOUNCEMENTS, PRAYER CONCERNS & THANKSGIVINGS

OPENING SENTENCE

Stand *Officiant* Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Philippians 1:2

Let us pray:

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION of SIN

Jesus said, "The first commandment is this: Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these."

Mark 12:29-31

Most merciful God,

All: **we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

*The priest offers Absolution.**Officiant:* Glory to you, Lord God of our fathers; **All:*

**you are worthy of praise; glory to you.
Glory to you for the radiance of your holy Name; *
we will praise you and highly exalt you for ever.**

**Glory to you in the splendor of your temple; *
on the throne of your majesty, glory to you.**

**Glory to you, seated between the Cherubim; *
we will praise you and highly exalt you for ever.**

**Glory to you, beholding the depths; *
in the high vault of heaven, glory to you.**

**Glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; *
we will praise you and highly exalt you for ever.**

Officiant God be with you.*All***And also with you.**

Let us pray.

silence is held.

O God, because without you we are not able to please you, mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

Genesis 50: 15-20

Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, 'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today.

The Word of God.

Thanks be to God.

Sit PSALTER

Psalm 103: 8-13 *read responsively, observing the verse*

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, *
slow to anger and of great kindness.

He will not always accuse us, *
nor will he keep his anger for ever.

He has not dealt with us according to our sins, *
nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.

For as the heavens are high above the earth, *
so is his mercy great upon those who fear him.

As far as the east is from the west, *
so far has he removed our sins from us.

As a father cares for his children, *
so does the Lord care for those who fear him.

EPISTLE READING

Romans 14: 1-12

Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand. Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

The Word of God.
Thanks be to God.

Sit GOSPEL READING

Matthew 18:21-35

Peter came to Jesus and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

"For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

The Word of God.
Thanks be to God.

MEDITATION

Stand The NICENE CREED

Officiant: We believe in one God,
All: **the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;
That we all may be one.

Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;
That your Name may be glorified by all people.

We pray for Justin the Archbishop of Canterbury; Michael our Presiding Bishop; Kevin our Bishop and all bishops, priests, and deacons;
That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.

We pray for Donald the President; Thomas our Governor, Sarah our Mayor and all who govern and hold authority in the nations and communities of the world;
That there may be justice and peace on the earth.

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.

Have compassion on _____ and all who suffer from any grief or trouble;
That they may be delivered from their distress.

Give to the departed ☩ eternal rest;
Let light perpetual shine upon them.

We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;
May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others. *silence is held*

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles, "Peace I give to you; my own peace I leave with you." Regard not our sins, but the faith of your Church, and give to us the peace and unity of that heavenly City, where with the Father and the Holy Spirit, you live and reign, now and for ever. **Amen.**

BLESSING & DISMISSAL

The peace of God which surpasses all understanding keep your hearts and your minds in the knowledge and love of the Lord and of his Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

And the blessing of God Almighty, ☩ Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

The PRAYERS

Officiant God be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Officiant Let us pray.

Officiant and People

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,

for ever and ever. Amen.

Let us go forth in peace rejoicing in the power of the Spirit. Alleluia, alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BIBLE STUDY - Our “Zooming” through the Bible is changing to Tuesday evenings at 7:00pm. Join us one day, or each week as your schedule allows. This week we continue exploring The Lord’s Prayer. A Zoom invitation will be sent to the Parish e-list each week. Simply click on the link on your computer or cell-phone.

HOLIDAY EXTRAVAGANZA - Saturday, October 10th - from 9:00-2:00 along 9th Street. Stay tuned for more information. If you’d like to volunteer, see Sue Erb.

The **PRAYERS of the PEOPLE**

For those who need God’s comfort and care: Richelle Stephens; Addison: George Varites.

For those celebrating birthdays this week: Angie Petrosky (*are we missing anyone?*)

The **SHARING of HOLY COMMUNION**

After the Dismissal, those who wish to remain to receive the Sacrament of Christ’s Body and Blood are welcome to remain.

- + **MASKS** - must remain in place throughout the celebration, except when individuals partake of the wafer and wine.
- + **SOCIAL DISTANCING of SIX FEET** - Please observe distancing while proceeding to receive the elements. Remember that “Slow, Meditative and Prayerful Solemnity” are hallmarks of the Spiritual Life, especially in approaching the Divine Presence in the Sacrament.
- + **INDIVIDUAL ELEMENTS** - are provided on separate trays. Consecrated wafers are provided on the left in paper containers. You may consume the wafer, then dispose the paper container in the basket provided. Then you may proceed to the right with individual disposable cups of consecrated (golden) wine and (purple) grape juice. If you wish to share in the wine, please take a cup and when consumed, place the empty cup in the basket provided.
- + **RETURN** - to your seats when finished for the concluding Prayer.

THE CELEBRATION of HOLY COMMUNION

As the Confession and Absolution of Sin, as well as the hearing of the Gospel read and preached, have already been observed, the faithful are prepared for the sharing of the Sacrament. The elements for Holy Communion have previously been consecrated, though a symbolic consecration of the ‘priest’s host’ and chalice will be observed for the celebration.

Celebrant: God be with you. *People:* **And also with you.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to God.**
Let us give our thanks to God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

The Celebrant continues.

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might:
Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.
Blest is He who comes in the Name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

The Celebrant continues with the Words of Institution.

Memorial Acclamation:

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Prior to receiving:

We do not presume to come to this your table, O merciful God, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your many and great mercies. We are not worthy even to gather up the crumbs under your Table. Yet you always have mercy upon those who call upon you. Grant us, therefore, gracious God, so to eat this Bread and drink this Cup, that we may forever dwell in Christ, and Christ in us. Amen.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

All: **Faithful God, in the wonder of your wisdom and love
you fed your people in the wilderness with the bread of angels,
and you sent Jesus to be the bread of life.
We thank you for feeding us with this bread.
May it strengthen us that by the power of the Holy Spirit
we may embody your desire and be renewed for your service
through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

GRACE CHURCH
PENTECOST 18 - A (RCL)

Honesdale, PA
12-13 September 2020
adapted from 2008

+ 2 +

Genesis 50: 15-21
Psalm 103
Romans 14: 1-12
Matthew 18: 21-35

“NO!!” or “YES!”

Invocation: AMEN.

+ + +

Norman Pittenger, a professor at General Seminary in New York
was a strong advocate of what was called Process Theology.

The short take on it, is that at every moment in life,
there are two alternatives:

God offers a “Yes,” and,

well, you know, the other guy pushes us toward a “No.”

Thus in the “process” of our lives,

God is always giving us another opportunity to be, well, holy.

A positive decision and a negative reaction from which we choose,
either consciously or sub-consciously.

But even if we choose the negative - which is human nature -

God will continue in the next moment to provide another positive.

Thus a “process” to our decisions, actions, and the future.

God is always going to give us a “Yes” possibility,

more than seventy-seven times,

eternally trying to pull us back towards holiness.

Imagine how blessed we would be if we would choose the “Yes”

from the very beginning to the very end!

So we return today after several weeks to the Joseph story.

I’ve always said if you want to know what you can do to your brother
and get away with it, read the book of Genesis!

Remember, Joseph’s brothers had tired of this haughty braggart
and decided to kill him, but then ‘listen to reason’

and instead sell him to slave traders heading to Egypt.

Years later while the brothers and their aged father Jacob
suffer famine and pestilence in Canaan,

Joseph had made it to second-in-command under Pharaoh.

Here come these poor starving Canaanites to Thebes

and discover their ‘dead’ brother alive and definitely well

the one from whom they have to beg food

How many times must I forgive my brothers?

Well, it only takes once, if done so nicely, sincerely and faithfully.

Joseph was in a perfect position.

High up on the ladder, he could have done anything he wanted,
taken a “No” instead of a “Yes”
and would have felt and been justified, after all,
legally supported, by what he would do.

Except forgive.

Who would do that? Who would not press charges?

Jesus wouldn't, nor did Joseph.

He didn't have much to lose in forgiving his brothers -
only food given to the poor, and the offering of his pride.

Many humans, though, in Joseph's position,
do not respond in so saintly a manner.

Take the corporate executive in Jesus' parable, for example,
Given millions of dollars of forgiveness
yet he couldn't forgive even a few dollars in return.

Forgiveness - Christian charity - was like warm soothing rain
falling on hard stone, flushing away without nourishing.

His heart was hard and unforgiving, as in Jesus' parable of the seed.

And for that he suffered - in this life and in the next!

We are handed possibilities.

We choose what we do with them -

the Free-Will which God gifts humanity from Creation.

How we choose is an answer that is given us at birth as mortal flesh,
or in Baptismal Re-Birth as faith-filled charitable Christian souls.

Caritas - filled with charity towards another.

One lives according to the human will -

which invariably will in our weaknesses choose the negative -
or one takes the challenge, choosing according to the Spirit,
and takes the high road - the difficult route -
the rocky path which nonetheless leads to divine perfection.

Seventy-seven times forgiving someone.

But when forgiveness is done in earnest and with deep love,
it only takes once.

The sadness of the human condition,

is that we don't learn it the first time -

either the forgiver or the forgiven.

It is too hard to believe.

And so we must do it over and over again.

First of all, it takes us at least seven times, maybe those seventy-seven,
to get it right.

Maybe it takes those seven, or those seventy-seven
for forgiveness to be accepted.
and the sisters or brothers to turn around.

In biblical terms, seven - as the seven days of creation - is completeness.

Seventy-seven, or in some translations seventy times seven -
is perfection multiplied exponentially.

God hasn't given up on us -
many more than seventy-times-seven times
has God offered us forgiveness.

Let's see - if I do the math, 70 times 7, that's 490.

At age 70, that would be God's forgiveness 7 times a year.

Not nearly enough!!

But it's a start.

God isn't done with me yet.

Nor with you.

Nor should you give up on your sister or brothers.

Joseph didn't.

God doesn't.

Jesus won't let Peter, either - or you or me!

But I wouldn't wait too long to start.

It took Joseph most of his life,
and some of us don't have that long.

Start forgiving now, and you too may find the perfection
seventy - seven times worth!

And those are better odds than any human resource will offer!

Our prayer today comes from our Hymnal:

“Forgive our sins as we forgive,” you taught us, Lord to pray;
but you alone can give us grace to live the words we say.

How can your pardon reach and bless the unforgiving heart
that broods on wrongs and will not let the old bitterness depart?

In blazing light your cross reveals the truth we dimly knew,
how small the debts men owe to us, how great our debt to you.

Cleanse the depths within our souls, and bid resentment cease;
then reconciled to God and man, our lives will spread your peace.

Hymnal 1982, #674

AMEN.