

The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

26-27 September 2020

The SERVICE of HOLY COMMUNION

ORGAN PRELUDE

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

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION of SIN

Dearly beloved, we have come together in the presence of Almighty God our heavenly Father, to set forth his praise, to hear his holy Word, and to ask, for ourselves and on behalf of others, those things that are necessary for our life and our salvation. And so that we may prepare ourselves in heart and mind to worship him, let us kneel in silence, and with penitent and obedient hearts confess our sins, that we may obtain forgiveness by his infinite goodness and mercy.

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, you declare your almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity: Grant us the fullness of your grace, that we, running to obtain your promises, may become partakers of your heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Ezekiel 18: 1-4, 25-32

The word of the LORD came to me: What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"? As I live, says the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins that shall die.

Yet you say, "The way of the Lord is unfair." Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed they shall die. Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right,

they shall save their life. Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. Yet the house of Israel says, "The way of the Lord is unfair." O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord GOD. Turn, then, and live.

The Word of God.

Thanks be to God.

Sit PSALTER **Psalm 25: 1-9** *read responsively, observing the verse*

1 To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul; my God, I put my trust in you; *
let me not be humiliated, nor let my enemies triumph over me.

2 **Let none who look to you be put to shame; ***
let the treacherous be disappointed in their schemes.

3 Show me your ways, O Lord, *
and teach me your paths.

4 **Lead me in your truth and teach me, ***
for you are the God of my salvation;
in you have I trusted all the day long.

5 Remember, O Lord, your compassion and love, *
for they are from everlasting.

6 **Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions; ***
remember me according to your love
and for the sake of your goodness, O Lord.

7 Gracious and upright is the Lord; *
therefore he teaches sinners in his way.

8 **He guides the humble in doing right ***
and teaches his way to the lowly.

9 All the paths of the Lord are love and faithfulness *
to those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

EPISTLE READING

Philippians 2: 1-13

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death-- even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

The Word of God.
Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM "At the Name of Jesus" R. Vaughan Williams, setting by R. Wienhorst

Stand GOSPEL READING

Matthew 21: 23-32

When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Jesus as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

"What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

The Gospel of Christ.
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.**

The PRAYERS of the PEOPLE - Form III

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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*

*The Celebrant offers a concluding Collect and a Blessing for those not wishing
to remain for the receiving of the Sacrament.*

THE CELEBRATION of HOLY COMMUNION

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.

Memorial Acclamation:

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

At the Fraction

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, grant us peace.**

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.**

BLESSING and DISMISSAL

response: **Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia!**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BIBLE STUDY - “Zooming” through the Bible” has moved to Tuesday evenings at 7:00pm. Join us one day, or each week as your schedule allows. This week we finish Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. A Zoom invitation is sent to the Parish e-list each week.

BLESSING of the ANIMALS - Sunday, October 4th at 2:00. Send a photo with the name of your pet by Friday, Oct. 2nd for a special Virtual Grace service.

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.

HARVEST HAM DINNER - Tuesday, October 20th with take-outs only. We need your help in selling tickets before hand so we know how much food to order and prepare. See Sue Erb or Zach Wyckoff for info and tickets. Adults \$12; Children (under 10) \$8.

The PRAYERS of the PEOPLE

For those who need God’s comfort and care: Richelle Stephens; Addison; Walter Barbe; George Varites; those affected by wildfires and hurricanes.

For those celebrating birthdays this week: Are we missing anyone?

The SHARING of HOLY COMMUNION

After the Blessing, 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 in paper containers. Consume the wafer, then dispose the paper container in the basket provided. Then proceed to the right for individual disposable cups of consecrated (golden) wine and (purple) grape juice. Take a cup and when consumed, place the empty cup in the basket provided.
- + RETURN - to your seats when finished for the concluding Prayer.

GRACE CHURCH
PENTECOST 20 - Proper 21 A (RCL)

Honesdale, PA
26-27 September 2020

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Ezekiel 18: 1-4, 25-32
Psalm 25: 1-8
Philippians 2: 1-13
Matthew 21: 23-32

EMPTYING TO BECOME FULL

+ + +

You know the drill:

deplete all the power from the battery,
before you recharge,

Fully discharge, beforehand,

and likewise fully charge to 100% before removing the cord,
otherwise the life of the battery is diminished.

Now, put that in context to St. Paul's Christological Hymn today:

Jesus emptied himself, being born in human likeness.
He humbled himself, *read 'discharged' himself*,
going completely dead on the Cross,
to be fully recharging to 100% power in the Resurrection.

OK, I admit - a crass illustration.

But let me carry it just a bit further, forgive me, Jesus.

With a computer that I need for work

and the cell-phone I need to connect with others,
I need that battery to be at full-charge.

We need Jesus to have come "fully charged," triumphant,
out of the grave
so that we can do the work we have been called to do
with His power in us.

Where would we be as people of faith, grace and love,
if the power of God's Holy Spirit
promised by Jesus to his followers at Pentecost
if that Spirit had not been empowering us.

Humility and Empowerment.

Humility leading to Empowerment.

Last week we heard Jesus tell his faithful that the last shall be first,
or in today's context, the powerless will be powerful.

When James and John come to him and ask to sit at the right and left,
the other 10 were angry, and

Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the
rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great
ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you;
but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your
servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must
be your slave;

Matthew 20:25-27

We are, in today's readings, on the afternoon of Palm Sunday.

Today's Epistle we just heard is appointed Palm Sunday every year.
and in today's Gospel Jesus has just ridden in the front door
of the sacred city of Jerusalem - not on a white stallion,
but on a simple grey donkey.

He has gone to the Temple,
overturned the tables of the crooked money changers
cursed the fig tree,
and is now confronting the authorities,
who press him for his own credentials:

"Who are you?

What right do you have?

How do you do these things?"

"Who are you, anyway?"

"I'm no one."

You didn't listen to John, you won't listen to me,
you of high position.

Only the meek and the lowly - the tax collectors and the prostitutes.

The illegal alien,

the transgendered,

those of a different color,

the protestors for justice,

they who are on the death-bed of Covid.

"The tired, the poor, the huddled masses yearning to breathe free.
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

These are the famous words of poet Emma Lazarus
inscribed in bronze on the base of the Statue of Liberty
and recited by every elementary school student -
or at least they were in my day.

One of the favorite songs which youth around the Diocese have sung
at most of our gatherings goes:

"Humble thyself in the sight of the Lord, *repeat*
and He will lift you up, higher and higher
and He will lift you up." *Bob Hudson, based on 1 Peter 5:6*

Any of you who know me, realize that I don't do humility well.
But I am called, you are called, we all are called as God's beloved
to follow the model of Christ.

What does it mean for you to humble yourself,
in the sight of the Lord?

Jesus gave up the throne and the riches of heaven to come
living and dying as an itinerant Galilean sandal-wearing hippy.

He tells his disciples,

"Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money-- not even an extra tunic. *Luke 9:3*

So again, I ask, now that you've had a moment to contemplate,

what *does* it mean for you to humble yourself?

And I don't mean to be knocked down by others,

but to take the seat of humility.

Somewhere Jesus says, take the lower seat at the celebration,

so that the Master will come and say to you,

"Come, come. Take the seat at the head table with me."

What can you do to offer yourself in humility, meekness,

quietude of allowing others ahead of you.

Oh, that makes me think of driving - how often do you wave someone

at the other corner or the on-ramp to pull ahead of you?

How often do you say to someone in line at Walmart -

heck, you only have three or four items -

get ahead of me, I'm in no hurry.

(Though maybe you really are.)

Now, that's true humility!

But then I come again in sermon number three -

what does emptying yourself mean to you?

How much riches have you accumulated over your life,

real treasures to be sure.

But things you don't really need,

have lost their usefulness to you,

but may in some way be a blessing to another?

We have a house full,

we have a Church building full.

And thanks to these past months,

we've been able, we've taken the initiative of Christ

to pass on to others through various sales and give-aways

things which were important to us at some point,

but are no longer - sentimental value notwithstanding -

needed in our lives,

and which our children and grandchildren won't want

to have to throw in the dumpster!

Talk about humility - having my beloved collection of mooses

thrown in the dumpster!

I'll tell you about Mom's collection of chickens and roosters, sometime.

This week I pondered what three things do I most hold as treasure -
not people, loved ones, including two dogs and a cat,
but things that define who I am.

You know my list:

my library, my organ
(neither of which are easy to carry out of a fire),
and the third thing was hard.

I think it would be my backpack.

For there I would have shelter (my tent),
a store house of food for several days,
a sleeping bag,
and emergency items, such as first aide.

Spoiler alert:

In our Tuesday evening Bible Study, we will be talking about this.

Treasures on earth which moth and rust destroy,
or saving up for treasures in heaven,
as Jesus concludes his Sermon on the Mount.

But humility is not about giving up things, necessarily,
but that is a tangible way of soul-searching
and determining what God requires of us.

Giving up things is a way of focusing ourselves
on what God considers as important in our lives and in others.

But then I consider St. Francis of Assisi and Mother Theresa,
who considered earthly treasures as nothing to serve the poor,
and such as St. Alban of Britain and Mahandas Gandhi,
even Pt. Desomd Doss of Hacksaw Ridge,
who gave of their lives even in the model of Christ,
for the salvation and redemption of others.

Now, with our sisters and brothers of the Jewish tradition
we can join in Yom Kippur - the Day of Atonement -
confessing our sins of over-indulgence, addiction,
self-importance,
negligence of the needs of others.

So, “dis-charge” yourself,
so that God can use you for His work in the world.

Let us commit ourselves to the model of our Savior Christ
in emptying ourselves,
and our lives,
as we sometimes say in our Communion service,
and as the Roman Centurion said to Jesus,
“Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word...”

AMEN.