

Sunday, August 30, 2020, XIII after Pentecost

Proper 17, Year A, the celebration of Holy Communion

Introduction

The prophet Jeremiah speaks of the incurable wound of his suffering yet finds in God's words the delight of his heart. When Peter doesn't grasp Jesus' words about suffering, Jesus tells the disciples they will find their lives in losing them. Such sacrificial love is described by Paul when he urges us to associate with the lowly and not repay evil with evil. In worship we gather as a community that we might offer ourselves for the sake of our suffering world.

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,
whose steadfast love is everlasting,
whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation.
Amen.

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection. When people join in, they speak softly:

Reconciling God,
**we confess that we do not trust your abundance,
and we deny your presence in our lives.
We place our hope in ourselves
and rely on our own efforts.
We fail to believe that you provide enough for all.
We abuse your good creation for our own benefit.
We fear difference and do not welcome others
as you have welcomed us.
We sin in thought, word, and deed.
By your grace, forgive us;
through your love, renew us;
and in your Spirit, lead us;
so that we may live and serve you in newness of life. Amen.**

Beloved of God,
by the radical abundance of divine mercy
we have peace with God through ✝ Christ Jesus,
through whom we have obtained grace upon grace.
Our sins are forgiven.
Let us live now in hope.
For hope does not disappoint,
because God's love has been poured into our hearts
through the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Prayer of the Day

O God, we thank you for your Son, who chose the path of suffering for the sake of the world. Humble us by his example, point us to the path of obedience, and give us strength to follow your commands, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Readings

[Romans 12:9-21](#)

Live in harmony

[Matthew 16:21-28](#)

The passion prediction and rebuke to Peter

Reading: Romans 12:9-21

Paul presents benchmarks for faithful relationships with Christians and non-Christians. Love is the unflinching standard of our behavior. When we encounter evil, we do not resort to its tactics but seek to overcome it with good. While Christians cannot control the actions and attitudes of others, we seek to live at peace with all people.

⁹Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹²Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. ¹³Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. ¹⁷Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. ¹⁸If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Gospel: Matthew 16:21-28

After Peter confesses that Jesus is "the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (16:16), Jesus reveals the ultimate purpose of his ministry. These words prove hard to accept, even for a disciple whom Jesus has called a "rock."

²¹From that time on, [after Peter confessed that Jesus was the Messiah,] Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. ²²And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." ²³But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

²⁴Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. ²⁶For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

²⁷“For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. ²⁸Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

Prayers of Intercession

When I say, “Lord, in your mercy,” you respond, “**Hear our prayer.**”

Confident of your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence is held as we gather our prayers.

God of faithfulness, you bid your people to follow Jesus. Let not suffering, nor discomfort, nor personal inclinations, nor the patterns most familiar to us govern our work, but our mission to follow and be faithful. Grant us trust in you, that we even as we lose our lives for the sake of Christ, we may discover joy in life through him.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of wonder, the earth is yours and all that is in it. Heal your creation and give us eyes to see the world as you do. As the seasons change, pattern the rhythm of our lives in harmony with all creation.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of all nations, you call us to live peaceably with all. Give us ears to hear one another, even those we name as enemies. Fill leaders with wisdom, insight, and compassion. Guide those who work in government on our behalf, and all who seek office in this year’s elections.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

O Jesus, masterful teacher, your teaching leads us to what matters. In this season of teaching and learning now beginning, support parents, children, teens, teachers, custodians, building engineers, cafeteria workers and all who work to make schools the places of learning that they are.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of salvation, you promise to deliver us. Give those who suffer a strong sense of your presence and love. Accompany those who are uncertain, raise the spirits of those who are despairing, and heal the sick, especially those dear to us whom we name before you now in our hearts *pause*

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God of community, you call us to rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, and persevere in prayer. We pray for Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church on this day – as we gather to receive the sacrament of your body together in person for the first time since March; as we gather after worship for a congregational meeting about an issue that is tender for us, where we are not all of one mind and heart. Even so, gather us under your cross. Hold us as one in your saving love. Show us your face in each other's faces, especially when we do not agree with each other.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for the offerings we bring.

Our ordinary gifts seem small when we stand in your presence. Multiply the gifts we are able to offer to make them abundant, not merely enough, that you may be seen through us.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Hear now the prayers of our hearts as we offer them before you both silently and aloud:

Silence for the prayers of people's hearts

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of all grace, you give us everlasting life. In love we recall your holy ones who now live in your undying light. Today we remember with Jesus and Crystal Tula his grandmother, Tomasa Dominguez, who died recently.

In our remembering, give us a foretaste of the feast to come.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Prayer after Communion

God of the welcome table,
in this meal we have feasted on your goodness
and have been united by your presence among us.
Empower us to go forth sustained by these gifts
so that we may share your neighborly love with all,
through Jesus Christ, the giver of abundant life.

Amen.

Blessing

The LORD bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and [little cross here] give you peace.

Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.

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Prayers adapted by Interim Pastor Janet S. Peterman

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