

June 21, 2020 -THIRD SUNDAY OF PENTECOST - Lect A- FATHER'S DAY

EXTRA Preparation for worship for our CANADA DAY Service JUNE 28

We always celebrate on the Sunday before Canada Day and this year is not any different.

So wear something red & white for fun! Have something red & white ready for your treat after worship. CALL ANOTHER MEMBER that you have not talked to in a while, on Sunday and have a chat! Take a picture of your family & send it to Dave.

Also we will have Holy Communion together - separately for the first time since March.

You will need either wine or grape juice and bread of some kind. You may use what cups and plates you have – do not go out & purchase. Here is a list:

- **a white cloth,**
- **large cup or individual ones,**
- **a large paten(plate) for bread or small –depending on the size of your family.**
- **A cross and a candle.**

Silver cups

Preparing for worship today:

Good morning – welcome to worship,

I hope you are able to gather everyone in your household together this morning. If you are not alone - assign parts of this beforehand. If you don't have a Bible you can google the scripture readings and print them out too. Perhaps print out copies of this for everyone present. This Liturgy is from the Lutheran Book of Worship and the modified prayers this morning are based on those from Sundays & Seasons.com.© 2020 Augsburg Fortress. Hymns are from the ELW & LBW.

Ahead of time - think about your father, grandfather, uncles, male family friends who you were/are close to. Remember – perhaps write a gratitude list- of the things they taught you, or their character/personalities. If these memories are hard ones to grasp or difficult ones to re-call, try to re-frame them in a positive light.

Shut off all the distractions in your home. Sit in the quiet for a bit – take some deep breaths. Light a candle.

GATHERING TOGETHER

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Hymn: LBW 554- This is my Father's World

The Lord be with you – and also with you

Prayer of the Day: Blessing of Fathers and All Men

God of all creation, pour out your blessing on all fathers and those who provide fatherly care. You have made them in your image and given them children to love and care for in your name. Bless them with a heart like your heart: discerning and thoughtful, bold and decisive, compassionate and loving. As they model for their children the life that is lived by faith and not by sight, grant them courage under pressure and confidence in your power. When troubles threaten to overwhelm them, grant them your coping calm. When doubts give rise to anxiety, shore up their trust in your promises. When joy fills their days, grant them a keen gratitude for your abundant supply of grace. Season them with a lively sense of humor, Lord, for it will make life richer for us all. In all circumstances preserve them as your own. We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

THE WORD

Jeremiah 20:7-13 Psalm 69:7-10,16-18 Romans 6:1b -11 Matthew 10:24-39

Today's homily, based on the Gospel of Matthew, is presented by the Rev. Doug Reble - Assistant to the Bishop of the Eastern Synod.

I suspect most of you who are listening to or reading this sermon have never heard the name Kenneth Feinberg. He is the lawyer who chaired the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund, which gave money to the family of each person who died in the 2001 terror attacks in the United States. Starting with a formula and then using his discretion, Feinberg considered the victims' age, their dependents, whether they had life insurance and their income and earning potential. The value assigned to those lost lives varied dramatically. As little as \$250,000 for blue collar workers and as much as \$7.1 million for executives. Feinberg, in an article I read in The New Yorker magazine, reflected on his experience. "As I met with the 9/11 families and wrestled with issues surrounding the valuation of lives lost I began to question this basic premise of our legal system. Trained in the law, I had always accepted that no two lives were worth the same in financial terms. But now I found the law in conflict with my growing belief in the equality of all life." In today's gospel reading from Matthew, Chapter 10, we read of Jesus sending his disciples into a perilous world. There will be divisions in their families. There will be "those who kill the body." The disciples must be prepared to take up the cross. And yet in the middle of this recitation of conflict and danger, Jesus suddenly speaks of the smallest, most insignificant creatures. "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet none one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father." In the marketplace, sparrows were the meat of the poor, the ground chuck of the first century. Yet their lives –their deaths –are not beneath God's attention and care.

"Do not be afraid," Jesus says, "you are of more value than many sparrows." When I told Bishop Michael Pryse, my colleague in our Eastern Synod office, that I was

writing a sermon based on Jesus' word about sparrows, he started to sing "God Sees The Little Sparrows Fall." At first I started to laugh and then I realized how come I didn't know it so I did what we often do and I Googled it. That got me on to another hymn about sparrows as these Google searches often do, entitled "His Eye On The Sparrow." I listened to a clip of Mahalia Jackson singing it in 1958 and Whitney Houston 30 years later. Never heard of the hymn so I did some research. I learned that Jesus' words "Do not be afraid, you are of more value than many sparrows," inspired Canadian schoolteacher Civilla Martin, in 1905, to write the words to that hymn, "His Eye On The Sparrow", a gospel hymn that declares with assurance, "I know God watches me." I also learned that this hymn became very popular in African-American churches. In a world that insists that black lives do not matter, Jesus declares that overlooked, exploited, brutalized lives are, in fact, of the greatest importance to God. In a world that says the life of a rich person is worth 28 times as much as the life of a working person, Jesus says that God pays special attention to those who are poor, struggling, and suffering. God cares. We are not alone. In these days of pandemic and COVID-19, how we all need to hear those words. God cares. We are not alone. Jesus' calculus for the value of a life has little to do with a person's income or earning potential. To Jesus, our lives have innate value, in and of themselves. We have value because we are creatures, like sparrows, made in God's image. As mystic Julian of Norwich wrote in the 15th century of her vision of the hazelnut: "I marvelled how it might suddenly have sank into nothing because of its littleness. And I was answered in my understanding: "It lasts and ever shall, because God loves it. "Friends, to Jesus, our value does not lead to compensation or a guarantee of safety. It means that we receive attention. The God who cares for the welfare of sparrows also keeps

track of every aspect of our lives, even tallying up the hairs of our heads. When St. Paul's description of divine love comes to a crescendo in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 13, he promises that one day we will know fully, even as we have been fully known. I would say that we already are fully known, known more deeply than we even know ourselves. Occasionally, well meaning Christians declare that "God doesn't care if you get a tattoo" or "God doesn't care if you have a glass of wine," or as I used to say to my mother as a young teenager, "God doesn't care if I wear jeans to church." While it is true that none of these choices is, for most of us, a matter of eternal consequences, the idea that God doesn't care is entirely untrue. There is nothing, not even the smallest thing, that is outside the circle of God's care. And if God cares about these little details, the sparrows of our lives, then how much more God cares about the shape of each life and of all our lives. Just remember. God's care is not for me alone, nor only for people like me, but for all of us. After the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund completed its work, Kenneth Feinberg received a call from the president of Virginia Tech University, asking him to manage the fund that would distribute compensation to the families of the students and faculty killed in the 2007 mass shooting. "I realized that Feinberg the citizen trumped Feinberg the lawyer. My legal training would no longer stand in the way. This time all victims —students and faculty alike —would receive the same compensation. "Dear friends in Christ. Sparrows and disciples alike, we know God watches us. To God, we matter. Hear that again. To God, we matter. In God's sight, there are no unimportant lives. In the name of the God who loves us all. Amen.

Hymn: God Sees the Little Sparrow Fall

Our Response

OFFERING PRAYER

God of goodness and growth, all creation is yours, and your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. Water and word, wine and bread: these are signs of your abundant grace. Nourish us through these gifts, that we might proclaim your steadfast love in our communities and in the world, through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song. **Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE - ZACH ZIMMERLING

Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Build us up, mothering God, as living stones united in your spiritual house. Continually strengthen your people church as we are sent forth to proclaim your love. We pray especially for new congregations and those in redevelopment. Lord, incline your ear to us, **and hear our prayer.**

Humble us, creator God, as part of your creation. Fill us with respect and awe for the world you have made, including volcanoes, ocean currents, tropical rainstorms, glaciers, and other forces that both destroy and create. Lord, incline your ear to us, **and hear our prayer.**

Align our ways to your love, O God. We pray for countries, leaders, and other organizations as they prepare places for those seeking refuge and safety. Lord, incline your ear to us, **and hear our prayer.**

God of healing and rest, help those whose hearts are heavy and weighed down by many troubles. Comfort their suffering, ease their distress, and carry their burdens. We pray for all those affected by Covid -19. We hold up all the front line workers who are diligent and persistent in their workplaces for the sake of all of us. Lord, incline your ear to us, **and hear our prayer.**

We pray for all mothers, especially those with little children, that God give them wisdom, love, strength, and patience to fulfill their calling. That husbands, fathers, and children give them honor, love, and respect that their lives be surrounded with joy and happiness. Lord, incline your ear to us, **and hear our prayer.**

Nurturing God, we pray for those who tend and teach young children, for the safe pregnancies of expectant parents, for newborns, for families who struggle with infertility and miscarriage. We give thanks for all who have shown mothering care, and we remember all for whom this day is difficult. Lord, incline your ear to us, **and hear our prayer.**

Generous God, you call into your brilliant light all who have died. Give us faith to take hold of the promise of your eternal life. Lord, incline your ear to us, **and hear our prayer.**

With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn ELW 781 – Children of the Heavenly Father

BLESSING

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

God, the creator, ✠ Jesus, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the comforter, bless you and keep you in eternal love. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.