

Introduction

Feast Of The Triumph Of The Cross is always on September 14, which was Tuesday of this last week this year. Most denominations move it to the closest Sunday. It happens that the readings for last Sunday and this Sunday are equally appropriate for this Feast. We also have our Semi-annual meeting at this time of the year. So, it was decided to split up the events between the two Sundays.

This Feast is also the day the Southern Tier Extension marks as its founding in 1996. Last Sunday we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Southern Tier Extension of Ray Of Hope. In fact, every time we gather to worship, the cross has triumphed in our lives. Every time someone visits our website and finds answers to their questions, the cross has triumphed in our lives. Every time someone asks us to remember them or someone in our prayers, the cross has triumphed in our lives. Every time we stop to pray, to sing a hymn, to read a Scripture verse, the cross has triumphed in our lives. Every one of these events are noticed by our living and ever-present Lord Jesus Christ. The theme of the entire Church Age is "The Lord is with you! And also with you, and you, and you, and you." He said, I will be with you always, even to the end of this age. So, He is with us. Jesus knows each and every time we take the time to allow to Cross to triumph in our lives.

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to God's people on earth.
You are the One God, Sovereign of the universe,**

**Only Holy God, we worship you,
we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:**

**have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of God:
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord of all,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,**

**with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of the
Holy Unity of God. Amen.**

First Reading: Wisdom 2:12, 17-20 Not in our NRSV
Inclusive Bible Version:

¹² Let's set a trap for the just, who greatly annoy us by opposing what we do and reproaching us for breaking the Law. They call us traitors to our heritage. ¹⁷ So let's test these spurious claims and see what happened to the just when they meet their end. ¹⁸ For if the just are God's children, god will reach down to rescue them from the hands of their enemies. ¹⁹ Let's test them with insults and torture to see how long they will hold out and learn how long their patience will last. ²⁰ Let's condemn them to die in shame: Why should they worry? If what they say is true, they will be protected!(The Inclusive Bible - © 2007 by Priests for Equality)

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord!

ALL: Thanks be to God!

Psalm 54: 3-6, 8. The response is The Lord upholds my life.

R. The Lord upholds my life.

O God, by your name save me,
and by your might defend my cause.

O God, hear my prayer;
hearken to the words of my mouth.

R. The Lord upholds my life.

For haughty people have risen up against me,
the ruthless seek my life;
they set not God before their eyes.

R. The Lord upholds my life.

Behold, God is my helper;
the Lord sustains my life.
Freely will I offer you sacrifice O God;
I will praise your name, O LORD, for its goodness.

R. The Lord upholds my life.

Second Reading: James 3:16—4:3 NRSV 2nd Test. Pg. 230

¹⁶ For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

¹⁷ But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸ Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

Submit Yourselves to God

4 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? ² You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. ³ When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord!

ALL: Thanks be to God!

The Gospel Reading is Mark 9:30-37. It is on page 45 in the back of your NRSV Bible. Rise if you are comfortable and let's sing the Gospel

Acclamation.

Reader: Truly present among us, the Lord is with you.

ALL: And also with you.

Reader: A reading of the Holy Gospel according to Mark.

**ALL: Glory to you, O Lord. May the Word of God be
in our (+) minds that we will understand it,
on our (+) lips that we will speak it, and
in our (+) hearts that we will love it.**

Jesus Predicts His Death a Second Time

³⁰ They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, ³¹ because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise.” ³² But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.

³³ They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the road?” ³⁴ But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.

³⁵ Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.”

³⁶ He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, ³⁷ “Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.”

Reader: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

ALL: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Sermon:

Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc. is the name of this ministry. The only name associated with this ministry is the "Name above all names." (see Philippians 2:8-11)

8 *Jesus humbled himself,
becoming obedient to death,
even death on a cross.*

9 *Because of this, God highly exalted him
and bestowed on him
the Name above every other name,*

10 *So that at the name of Jesus
every knee must bend,
in the heavens, on the earth,
and under the earth,*

11 *and every tongue proclaim
to the glory of God:
JESUS CHRIST IS LORD.*

(based upon the New American Bible - divine office version - 1970 with inclusive language added.)

Notes from three years ago, September 23, 2018 – same readings.

Worship is our primary activity as a church. There is an old standard in the church, *lex orandi, lex credendi* which means that "the law of prayer is the law of faith" or "that which we pray is that which we believe." Our prayer, our worship is the key to understanding what God has revealed for us to accept as true. Our congregation offers the leadership, organization, presentation of worship experiences, and the physical building space for worship and education in spirituality as our primary service to the general public. All are welcome to avail themselves to our services of worship.

<http://www.rayofhopechurch.com/Worship.htm>)

=====Sermon Notes=====

Last week we celebrated the fact that Ray Of Hope has always been a faith plus works church. As we celebrated the 22nd anniversary (** in 2021 it was the 25th anniversary) of our first worship event in the Southern Tier, we noted so many of the ways we have put our faith into action as a

congregation. Just as last week so this week in this Gospel it is all about acknowledging who Jesus is. This is the primary message of Ray Of Hope Church, who Jesus is and why this is so important for ALL people of every sexual orientation and every gender expression, even as we continue to discover more of both of them.

Many times people ask how this old book the Bible can be relevant for today. Today's readings have three layers to them: 1—the actual historicity of the events described for the people of that time and place, 2—the voice of Jesus in prophecy in the first reading, the voice of Jesus as Head of His Church in the second reading, and prophecy fulfilled in the Gospel as He explains the kind of death he would endure for our salvation. But the 3rd level is universal truth regarding how people do things to sabotage good works. How interesting it is that people seem to sometimes get satisfaction out of setting up other people's failures and lack of success. We see this all through life from sibling fighting with children, to in-school bullying and cheating to get ahead, to problems on the job with in-fighting, to dishonest and even criminal corruption all through every level of commerce and politics even up to a world scope. What the Scriptures are telling us is people using cheating, problem causing, and tearing others down has been around since the beginning of sin in the world. With this knowledge we can be sure we do not participate in it, and when we find we have participated, to correct our ways and clean up our paths. No one is immune from sin and failure, only God exists like that and Christ proved that with living his sinless life.

The second reading is our continued study on the Book of James. The Book of James is an instruction book on how to understand the life of being a Christian and a part of the Church in our modern day. The wisdom contained in these verses has proven timeless.

The verses today address when the church itself deals with envy, selfish ambition, disorder, fighting, quarrels, and so on. Read the second reading again. What is and what has always been the solution and weapons against these kinds of problems? Prayer, right relationship with each other and with God, Scripture study, and applied living principles we learn and

focus on in the church. We can always grow and improve on all of these things. The Scriptures are here as our divine guide to living out God's will.

Faith without works is Dead.

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+ We Invoke the Blessing Of The Holy Spirit

Pastor: Here at Ray Of Hope Church, everyone prays together to ask the Holy Spirit to give to us the exact same gifts that Jesus gave when He instituted Holy Communion for His Church. At this time I invite you to extend your hands forward over the bread and fruit of the vine, or extend your arms out with palms turned up in prayer and say the following Invocation of the Holy Spirit with me.

ALL: O God, in the Name of Jesus, we, your faithful people, ask your Only One and Holy Spirit to bless and separate this bread and fruit of the vine for Christ's purpose. Through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit, give to us the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in precisely the exact same manner that He gave them, and commissioned us to do often in His Holy Name. You alone, O Loving, True God, authenticate for us that this is the Messiah, Christ, New Covenant Meal that Jesus instituted for our Spiritual and physical well-being. We ask this in the Name of Jesus. Amen

+ The Words Of The Institution Of The Holy Eucharist

Pastor: Please lower your hands now. Please lift at this time the Eucharistic Body Of Christ, the Bread of Salvation and together we will say aloud our Lord and Saviour's words of institution when he gave us the Blessed Sacrament.

**ALL: Before He was given up to death, a death He freely accepted,
He took the bread and gave you thanks. He broke the bread,
gave it to his disciples, and said:
Take this, all of you, and eat it: This is my body which will be given up for you. Do this in memory of me.**

(pause for adoration**) (**you may bow or genuflect if you choose to**)**

Pastor: Please set down the Bread of Life. Please lift now, the cup of salvation. Now, for the cup we say aloud:

**ALL: When the supper was ended, He took the cup. Again He gave you thanks and praise, gave the cup to His disciples, and said:
Take this, all of you, and drink from it: This is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me.**

(pause for adoration**) (**you may bow or genuflect if you choose to**)**

Pastor: Please set down the Cup of Salvation.

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Oh, My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. I love you above all things, and I welcome you in my soul. Since I cannot now receive you in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, come spiritually into my heart. Cleanse and strengthen me with your grace, Lord Jesus, and let me never be separated from you. May I live in you, and you in me, in this life and the life to come. Amen.

Pastor: The Lord is with you!

ALL: And also with you!

Pastor: (a prayer is said) In the Name of God, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

ALL: Amen

ALL: Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen

(Romans 15:13)

Pastor: We go forth in peace and love to serve the Lord ...

ALL: ... on our journey into renewal, fresh beginnings, new possibilities, and a renewed embrace of our potential! Thanks be to God.

SONG:

Announcements:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF GIFTS AND DONATIONS

General Offering for the week of September 12 \$428.00. Attendance 5. Special gifts this week: Michael Quinnell gave \$125.00 for candles for the chapel. Lisa Frost donated a bottle of wine for Holy Communion. Lisa Frost donated the annual copyright fee of \$66.00. Kaiden and Brother thank Steve Fox, Lisa Frost, Christina McLaughlin, and Cheryl Allen for providing rides while our van was being repaired and during Brother's recovery from surgery. **We give God thanks and praise for all the gifts given.**

The World Communion Sunday scheduled for October 3 will not be shared by the Elmira Clergy group due to COVID-19. The choir rehearsals also have been cancelled.

Kaiden asks for your prayers this Wednesday as Kaiden joins the world of eunuchs in the first stage of gender confirmation surgery. Dr. Nikolavsky will be the surgeon at Upstate Medical Center. We praise God for the WPATH Standards of Care making gender surgery safe and available to many more people.

Bible Enrichment will be on track Tuesday September 28, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.