

(upbeat organ music)

- Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit that we may perfectly love thee and worthy magnify the holy name through Christ our Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

- Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ says, "Thou shall love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all by mind." This is the first and great commandment. And this second is like unto it. Thou shall lovey neighbor is thy self. On these two commandments, hang all the law and the prophets. ♪ Christ have mercy upon us ♪ ♪ Lord have mercy upon us ♪ ♪ Lord have mercy upon us ♪ ♪ Christ have mercy upon us ♪ ♪ Christ have mercy upon us ♪ ♪ Christ have mercy upon us ♪ ♪ Lord have mercy upon us ♪ ♪ Lord have mercy upon us ♪ ♪ Lord have mercy upon us ♪

- The Lord be with you.

Congregation: And with your spirit.

- Let us pray. O God, our father whose son, our Lord Jesus Christ have given us in this wonderful sacrament, the memorial of his passion. Grant us so to reverence the sacred mysteries of his body and blood that we've ever perceived within ourselves the fruit of his redemption, who now liveth and reigneth with thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever.

Congregation: Amen.

- The word of God written in the first letter to the Thessalonians. For this reason brethren, in all our distress and affliction, we have been comforted about you through your faith for now we live if you stand fast in the Lord. For what thanksgiving can we render to God for you, for all the joy, which we feel for your sake before our God praying earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face, and supply what is lacking in your faith. Now may our God and father himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all men as we do to you, so that he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before our God and father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with his saints. Here endeth the epistle. (energetic organ music) (choir sings)

- The holy gospel of our Lord, Jesus Christ, according to Saint Matthew.

All: Glory be to thee, O Lord.

- Jesus left the temple and was going away when his disciples came to point out to him, the buildings of the temple. But he answered them, "You see all these, do you not, truly I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down." As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately saying, "Tell us, when will this be and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?" And Jesus answered them, "Take heed that no one leads you astray, for many will come in my name saying, 'I am the Christ' and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All this is but the beginning of the birth pains. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation, and put you to death. And you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will fall away and betray one another, and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because wickedness is multiplied, most men's love will grow cold. But he who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations. And then the end will come." The gospel of the Lord.

Congregation: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

- In the name of God, father, son, and Holy Spirit, amen. I would like to tell you a story this morning. It is a story about a little boy whose name is Richard. And it is a story that comes from an Episcopal church in Huntsville, Alabama. Richard was a member of the second grade class at St. Thomas Church. He got along relatively well with the members of his class. The other boys and girls liked him and appreciated him. But there was one thing that was different about Richard. He was retarded. And so there were times when the teachers and the other boys and girls had to wait for him to catch up. But he always managed to keep up with them even if he was a little slow. On this particular Sunday, a lot of work had gone into the plans for this class. You see it was Easter, and the teachers wanted to especially celebrate that day in a special way with their boys and girls. They thought and thought about what they could do. Should they retell the beautiful Easter story again for the boys and girls? Should they simply reflect with the class on what the day already meant to them? Should they have an Easter egg hunt and a party? All of these things went through the minds of the teachers as they tried to decide what would be the best way to spend that hour with their students. Finally, after a much thought and prayer, the decision was made to do something a little different. The teachers gathered enough of the plastic containers that legs ladies hose come in so that every member of the class could have one. These were different colors and shaped very much like Easter eggs, except that they were of course larger than most Easter eggs. Each boy and girl was asked to go out into the church yard to get something that represented that day to them. St. Thomas Church was in a large wooded plot where there were many exciting natural possibilities. Very quickly all of the boys and girls scattered, including Richard to find that special item for that special day. After about 30 minutes, one by one, each of the boys and girls began to return to share what he or she had found. Each one came into the class, holding proudly his egg with his secret inside. Each seemed so poor least and could not wait to show and tell its contents. One by one, each second grader opened his container and displayed what was inside. Some of them told why the contents were especially important on this Easter Day. Some others had items that were unexplainable, only that they were important to the finder. There was a butterfly and there were flowers.

there was a rock, and there was a pine cone. One by one, each boy and girl displayed his Easter symbol. And finally, it was time for Richard to open his egg. When he did the teachers cried inside because Richard's egg was empty. Oh, Richard did not understand the exercise. Oh, Richard did not have enough time to find something. Oh, Richard needed more of their help, and they had been insensitive to his need. But then Richard spoke. Very quietly and hesitantly he said, "He is not here, He has risen." "He is not here, He has risen." And the teachers realized that Richard had perhaps better understood the meaning of Easter Day, and how that day and every Sunday speaks to the lives of those of us as we live them each day. A year later Richard got very sick. As a matter of fact there seemed to be little that anyone could do for him And he died. But somehow in all of the sadness that surrounded his death, there was also great joy for what he had contributed to the lives of so many people in his brief nine years. Richard's class was asked to sit together at his funeral at St. Thomas Church. This seemed to be rather hard to some people, but most of the boys and girls wanted to be there. And it was a joyous celebration of the life, death and resurrection of a little boy. And at the end of the celebration, each of the members of his church school class went up to the altar and placed there now empty Easter eggs there. St. Paul says in the eighth chapter of his letter to the Romans, "We are God's children, and if children then heirs." We see God's heirs and Christ fellow heirs if we share his sufferings now in order to share his splendor hereafter. For I reckon that the sufferings we now endure, bear are no comparison with the splendor, which is in store for us. For the created universe waits with eager expectation for God's sons and daughters to be revealed. It was made a victim of frustration, not by its own choice, but because of him who made it so yet always there is hope, amen. And now to God the father, God the son, God the Holy Spirit, we ascribe as his most justly do Almighty majesty dominion and power henceforth world without him.

Congregation: Amen.

ALL: I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten son of God begotten of his father before all worlds, God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the father, by whom all the were made, who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the holy ghost of the Virgin Mary and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day he rose again, according to the scriptures and ascended into heaven. And seated on the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead whose kingdom shall have no end. And I believe in the holy ghost, the Lord and giver of life who proceeded from the father and the son. With the father and the son together is worshiped and glorified, who speak by the prophets. And I believe one Catholic and apostolic church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come, amen.

- Father we pray for the holy Catholic Church.

Congregation: That we all may be one.

- Grant that every member of the church may truly and humbly serve thee.

Congregation: That thy name may be glorified by the people.

- We pray for all bishops, priests and deacons.

Congregation: That may faithfully serve upon ministers.

- We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world.

Congregation: That there may be peace and justice on earth.

- May we seek to do thy will in all that we undertake.

Congregation: That we may be blessed in all our works.

- Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble.

Congregation: That they may be delivered from their distress.

- Grant rest eternal to the departed.

Congregation: Let light perpetual shine upon them.

- We praise thee for all by saints who have entered into joy.

Congregation: May we also come to share thy heavenly kingdom.

- Let us pray for our own needs and those of others. Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom who knowest our necessities before we ask, in our ignorance in asking we beseech thee to have compassion upon our infirmities and those things, which for our unworthiness, we dare not, and for our blindness cannot ask, mercifully give us for the sake of thy son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

- Ye who do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbors, and intend to lead the new life, following the commandments of God. And walking from hence forth in his holy ways, draw near with faith and make your humble confession to Almighty God, devoutly kneeling.

- Almighty God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, judge of all men. We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness which we from time to time most grievously have committed by thought, word, and deed against the divine majesty, provoking most justly via wrath and indignation against us. We do earnestly repent and are hardly sorry for these our misdoings. The remembrance of them

is grievous unto us. The burden of them is intolerable. Have mercy upon us. Have mercy upon us most merciful father, for thy son, our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that has passed and grant we may ever hereafter serve and please thee in newness of life, to the honor and glory of thy name through Jesus Christ, our Lord, amen. Almighty God, our heavenly father who have his great mercy have promised forgiveness of sins to all those who have hearty, repentance and true faith turned unto him, have mercy upon you pardon and deliver you from all your sins confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and bring you to everlasting life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

- The peace of the Lord be always with you.

Congregation: And with your spirit.

- I wanna thank the administration and those responsible for this beautiful edifice for letting us year after year share it with them in this grand and glorious service. I also want to express my appreciation to the Reverend John Jessup, the youth commission and all who volunteered to handle the details of this service. We owe a particular debt of gratitude to Father Bruce Shepard, who is chaplain here at Duke University, who year after year is consumed with children and fried chicken, and makes the arrangements for this service. He already has it arranged for next year, and the date is November the 6th. So Bruce stays one year ahead of himself. I'm grateful to our organist, the choir, the young people's choir from the Chapel of The Cross, and the young people who are sharing with them from St Titus Church in Durham. This is began years ago as an Acolyte Festival, at which we prepared for 75 people to attend. And the first year there were over 900. It has slowly become and is developing into, not only an acolyte but a youth festival. I think this is important. I think it is important to you to be here. It is important to us that you are here. It is important to the church as a whole, that you are here. And it is important to everyone to have this witness of as many young people as are in this church today who stand here in the name of the faith, which they profess as Episcopalians to share at the Lord's table in the breaking of bread and the pouring of wine. More important, it's good for your soul. And I rejoice. And it's good for my soul just to see you here, and to share in the service with you. I'm supposed to make an announcement. You will be directed by the ushers to the stations where you will make your communion. To do good and to distribute forget not for with such sacrifices, God is well pleased.
(organ music) (organ music) (choir sings) (organ music) (organ music)

- The Lord be with you.

Congregation: And with your spirit.

- Lift up your hearts

Congregation: We lift them up to the Lord.

- Let us give thanks unto our Lord God

Congregation: It is meet and right so to do.

- It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto thee, O Lord Holy Father, Almighty, everlasting God. Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name evermore praising the and saying. (organ music) (choir sings) Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Congregation: Hosanna in the highest.

- Sorry father, I have sinned.

- All glory be to the almighty God our heavenly father, father of thy tender mercy didst give thine only son, Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption. Who made there by his one oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect and sacrifice oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. And did institute and in his holy gospel command us to continue a perpetual memory of that his precious death and sacrifice until his coming again. For in the night in which he was betrayed, he took bread. And when He had given thanks, He break it, and gave it to his disciple saying, "Take, eat, this is my body, which is given for you do this in remembrance of me." Likewise, after supper he took the cup. And when he had given thanks, he gave it to them saying, "Drink ye all of this, for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins. Do this as oft as you shall drink it in remembrance of me." Wherefore, O Lord and heavenly Father according to the institution of thy dearly beloved son, our savior Jesus Christ, we thy humble servants to celebrate and make here before thy divine majesty, with these thy holy gifts which we now offer unto thee, the memorial thy son hath commanded us to make, having in remembrance the blessed passion and precious death his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension, rendering unto the most hearty thanks for the innumerable benefits procured unto us by the same. And we most humbly beseech thee, O merciful father to hear us and of thy almighty goodness vouchsafe to bless and sanctify with thy word and Holy Spirit. These thy gifts and creatures of bread and wine that we receiving them according to thy on our savior, Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be part takers of his most blessed body and blood. And we earnestly desire thy fatherly goodness, mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Most humbly beseeching thee two grant that by the merits and death of thy son, Jesus Christ and through faith in his blood, we and all thy whole church may obtain remission of our sins and all of the benefits of his passion. And here we offer and present unto the O Lord, ourselves our souls and bodies to be a reasonable holy and living sacrifice unto thee. Humbly beseeching thee that we and all others who shall be partakers of this holy communion may worthily receive the most precious body and blood of thy son Jesus Christ, be filled with thy grace and heavenly benediction, and made one body with him that he made well in us and we in him. And although we are unworthy through our manifold sins to offer unto thee any sacrifice, yet we beseech thee to accept this our bounden duty and service, not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offenses through Jesus Christ, our Lord, by whom and with whom in the unity of the holy ghost, all honor in glory be unto thee, O father Almighty, world without end.

Congregation: Amen.

- And now as our savior Christ has taught us we are bold to say.

All: 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, the power and the glory, for ever and ever, amen

- Alleluia Christ our passover has sacrificed for us.

Congregation: Therefore let us keep the feast not with the old leaven. (organ music) (choir sings) (organ music)

- Let us pray.

All: Almighty and everliving God, we most heartily thank thee for that thou dost feed us, in these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of thy son our savior Jesus Christ, and dost assure us thereby of thy favor and goodness towards us, and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy son, the blessed company of all faithful people, and are also heirs, through hope, of thy everlasting kingdom. And we humbly beseech thee, O heavenly Father, so to assist us with thy grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee and the holy ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end, amen.

- The blessing of God, Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be amongst you and all those whom you love both this day and forevermore.

Congregation: Amen.

- Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Congregation: Thanks be to God. (upbeat organ music)