Grace and peace from God and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Today,, we have yet again a temptation for Jesus. This time it is not the devil who directly lays out the temptation. The Pharisees approach Jesus with a warning about his safety, telling him to “get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you” (Luke 13:31). They not only want Jesus to leave, but one can assume they also want Jesus to stop doing what he was doing: challenging the Pharisees, teaching about God, and healing on the sabbath. We know the Pharisees are “very hostile” *Luke 11:53-54* ***53****When he went outside, the scribes and the Pharisees became hostile to him and began to interrogate him about many things.* However, before totally disregarding the Pharisees or totally demonizing them we should consider they were very religious try very hard to worship God in the way they here brought up which was passed down throughout history over many generations. Their issue was instead of what God was telling them they became more focused on themselves and did not listen to the prophets who wanted them to take care of the hungry, the sick, the naked, the imprisoned and others who are in need. Our faith community should not be self-centered but rather focus on those in need. My limited experience tells me congregations that are focused on themselves, and their personal comfort are closing. That is why I enjoy being at St. Paul where people understand we are not here for ourselves but rather for others. We should also consider we all fall short of the glory of God. Could the Pharisees not want Jesus to come to harm since they knew how dangerous Herod is or are they most concerned for their own comfort and social positions at the head of the table and enjoying their wealth? We could easily conclude their warning is not a genuine expression of concern but rather an attempt to stop his mission and ministry from interfering with their social and religious position. Afterall Jesus came to afflict the unafflicted and unafflict the afflicted. He spent his time with the poor, the hungry (he was a MasterChef), despised tax collectors (he too was despised), shepherds, the sick, the naked, etc. not the royalty of the society who were ignoring the needs of the people in conflict with what God wanted them to do as his chosen people. That is why Jesus is on this journey to go up to Jerusalem, up on the cross and up to heaven to give hope to the hopeless. That is why so many people would follow Jesus and listen to him in large crowds. God figured out a way for them to have hope. We are a part of that hope as we

However, Jesus will not be distracted or be tempted to turn away from his purpose, even if that includes moving toward his own death in Jerusalem. He hear in Luke 9:51 “When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.” In Jesus’ ability to fulfill his purpose, even amid opposition, we find inspiration as we seek to live our lives in concert with God’s purposes. As Christians, Jesus’ purpose is our purpose. The church, the body of Christ, doesn’t exist for itself. Rather, the church exists to be a partner with God in God’s mission to love, bless, and reconcile the world.

Jesus’ metaphor of being the mother hen who protects her chicks makes sense when he calls Herod a fox. Have you ever watched nature films or seen in nature where the mother bird will fight a much larger and stronger predator to protect her offspring. Here Jesus uses a mother hen as an example who will resolutely shield her chicks and will stand up to the much more formidable fox who wants to snatch them: if he wants to get them, he’ll have to go through her first which means he needs to kill her first. At the end of the 40 days of Lent, we will remember that a fox did indeed kill the mother hen on a hill outside Jerusalem Jesus was no match for the Roman army and the Judeans who were against him and the chicks scattered. But we look to the coming days after Good Friday to Easter, when the hen will rise from the empty tomb to gather all her chicks under her wings once more.

We are brought again by the motherhood of mercy and grace into our natural place, for which we were created by the motherhood of natural love. A mother’s service is nearest, readiest, and surest. It is nearest because it is most natural. It is readiest because it is most loving. And it is surest because it is most true. We realize that all our mothers bear us for pain and for dying. But our true mother Jesus—all love—alone bears us for joy and for endless living, blessed may he be! He sustains us within himself in love and hard labor, until the fullness of time. Yet it is necessary for him to feed us, for the most precious love of motherhood had made him a debtor to us. A mother can give her child her milk to suck, but our precious mother Jesus can feed us with himself. He does so most courteously and most tenderly, with the blessed sacrament, which is the precious food of true life.

—*Julian of Norwich*

[Julian of Norwich, in *Revelations of Divine Love*

As followers of Christ are to follow Jesus, the Son of God. We are to be protectors of those in need. The hungry, the homeless, those who are marginalized, refugees, those imprisoned and the poor. We advocate for these with our elected officials through writing, phone calling and attending meetings along with working with advocate groups. We are the hands for God’s work in our community. Go, see and do. Amen.