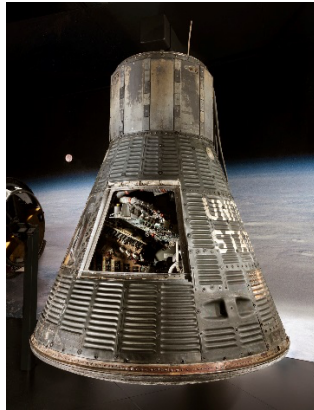




**Sunday- September 27, 2020 – Pentecost 17**

## **Father Joe's Message – Deacons in Space**



### **Scriptural References:**

***Philippians 2: 1-5 "Do nothing from selfish ambition but in humility. Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others."***

Greetings Saints, and again may I say how delighted and blessed we are to be today celebrating this New Beginning for Sheryl Haase, Deaconate Postulant for Holy Orders. Mona and I are blessed to know Sheryl and also Sheryl's spouse Dan who has crossed to the Spirit World, but my sense is that he is very close by today. Sheryl was one of the first of the All Saints Community to greet us when Mona and I first moved to Vancouver and were "church shopping." Immediately, Sheryl was open and welcoming to myself and my family and quickly we became friends. Today's Message is spoken in Sheryl's honor and is entitled: "Deacons in Space."

The year 1962 was a long one for our brand-new National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and also for United States Marine Corps pilot and astronaut John Glenn, the first American to be launched into orbit around the earth. I had the privilege to see Captain Glenn's space capsule, Friendship 7 twice.

The first time at the National Air and Space Museum and the second viewing at the Smithsonian. Each time I was amazed and astounded for several reasons. First and foremost was the size and primitive simplicity of the Friendship 7 capsule. It appeared to be the size of a slightly oversized trash bin with barely enough space for a person. And then the technology, or rather the lack of it, was astounding. Old toggle switches, and radio dials, some big, old screw-in type indicator lights that looked like they came from an old and discarded vintage box of Christmas decorations. Oscilloscopes and gauges right out of old Buck Rodgers space movies from long ago. Today the Friendship 7 space capsule would not pass even a rudimentary safety check, and today we would not even allow one of our children to sit in it. What person in his right mind would agree to...first volunteer for such a mission, then knowingly and willingly climb into such thing, and then finally would agree to have it placed on top of thousands of pounds of solid rocket fuel and then get shot into orbit around the earth, not knowing what would happen next? But, faithfully hoping that somebody did the calculations right and knew what they were doing, Captain John Glenn did, and I suspect most Deacons and postulants and candidates for the Diaconate would also. The path to the Diaconate feels remarkably like the voyage of Friendship 7 in orbit around the earth.

The journey to get Captain John Glenn into orbit was long and arduous, almost an entire decade in the making. Test after test, running simulation after simulation...scenario upon scenario. Learning and more learning occurring every day. Everything that could go wrong, did and fixes and workarounds and improvements abounded as a result of the process. And while Captain Glenn sat alone in tiny Friendship 7 on that monster of a Mercury-Atlas 6 rocket on that morning of February 20, 1962, a veritable army of scientists, technicians, medical experts, support personnel, engineers, mathematicians and physicists had got him there. In his pocket, Captain Glen carried a note with him on that day. It read, "I am a stranger. I come in peace...."

Sheryl Haase's journey to the ordained ministry of the Diaconate is a lot like the journey of Captain John Glenn into orbit. While she sits on the tip of the rocket alone, so many have supported and will support her launch into ordained ministry. Sheryl came to me on a chilly March day, March 22, 2016 and we chatted about her perceived call to "something." Her being compelled to

somehow “be of service.” That August, a Clearness Circle was convened led by Reverend Elise Astleford to help Sheryl clear the mist around what God was wanting from her. Later in 2017, two Discernment Teams were assembled here at All Saints to see if we agreed as a Community that Sheryl was destined for “something more.” Those Discernment teams were professionally and perceptively led by our own Fiona Neumann and unanimously agreed that Sheryl indeed had the “right stuff.” Next, on to the Commission of Ministry and interview after interview followed by Seminary at The Iona School. And now a year-long internship in a new place, St Anne’s. Having to leave behind the comfort, the safety, the solidity and predictability of her church family. Her personal journey into the diaconal unknown is at day 1,650 and counting as of today. Sheryl continues strong, confident, competent and open to what Spirit has in store next. Today, climbing in with Captain John Glenn and so many others who said “Yes” to continue an unknown a journey of faith and hope. Why do they do it? What is it with these astronauts and these Deacons? Why, because they simply cannot...not do it. It is their call, their vocation, their destiny, their vision, their purpose and meaning. Simply, to serve. They are compelled to do so and simply cannot envision a scenario where they wouldn’t climb into the capsule.

As Sheryl climbs into the snug fit of her capsule today, and we lovingly button up the hatch, she will wave to us through the small window, through which she will begin to see the new world of a Deacon. Different, bigger, challenging, emergent, and ever changing. As she feels the power rumble beneath her, and she lifts off to new places, challenges and accomplishments, she too will carry a small note just like Captain John Glenn did 58 years ago:

I am a Stranger

I come in Peace

I come to Serve

***Philippians 2: 1-5 “Do nothing from selfish ambition but in humility. Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others.”***

