

Sunday, July 1, 2018

Lectionary 13

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and merciful God, we implore you to hear the prayers of your people. Be our strong defense against all harm and danger, that we may live and grow in faith and hope, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

First Reading: Lamentations 3:22-33

The book of Lamentations is one of our most important sources of information about the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians in 587 BCE. Though the people admit that God's judgment was just, today's reading declares a fervent trust that God will not leave them forever.

²²The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases,
his mercies never come to an end;

²³they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.

²⁴"The LORD is my portion," says my soul,
"therefore I will hope in him."

²⁵The LORD is good to those who wait for him,
to the soul that seeks him.

²⁶It is good that one should wait quietly
for the salvation of the LORD.

²⁷It is good for one to bear
the yoke in youth,

²⁸to sit alone in silence
when the Lord has imposed it,

²⁹to put one's mouth to the dust
(there may yet be hope),

³⁰to give one's cheek to the smiter,
and be filled with insults.

³¹For the Lord will not
reject forever.

³²Although he causes grief, he will have compassion
according to the abundance of his steadfast love;

³³for he does not willingly afflict
or grieve anyone.

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 8:7-15

Paul encourages the Corinthians to honor their commitment to participate in the collection his churches are organizing for the Christians in Jerusalem. He presents Jesus as an example of selfless stewardship and reminds them that Christians have received abundantly so that they can share abundantly.

⁷Now as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you—so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking.

⁸I do not say this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others. ⁹For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. ¹⁰And in this matter I am giving my advice: it is appropriate for you who began last year not only to do something but even to desire to do something—¹¹now finish doing it, so that your eagerness may be matched by completing it according to your means. ¹²For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has—not according to what one does not have. ¹³I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between ¹⁴your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance. ¹⁵As it is written,

“The one who had much did not have too much,
and the one who had little did not have too little.”

Gospel: Mark 5:21-43

Jairus, a respected leader, begs Jesus to heal his daughter. A woman with a hemorrhage is ritually unclean, treated as an outcast in Jewish society. Both Jairus and the unnamed woman come to Jesus in faith, believing in his power to heal and bring life out of death.

²¹When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. ²²Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet ²³and begged him repeatedly, “My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live.” ²⁴So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. ²⁵Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. ²⁶She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. ²⁷She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸for she said, “If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.” ²⁹Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. ³⁰Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, “Who touched my clothes?” ³¹And his disciples said to him, “You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, ‘Who touched me?’” ³²He looked all around to see who had done it. ³³But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. ³⁴He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.”

³⁵While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader’s house to say, “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?” ³⁶But overhearing what they said, Jesus

said to the leader of the synagogue, “Do not fear, only believe.”³⁷ He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James.³⁸ When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly.³⁹ When he had entered, he said to them, “Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping.”⁴⁰ And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child’s father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was.⁴¹ He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha cum,” which means, “Little girl, get up!”⁴² And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement.⁴³ He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Growing in faith and discipleship, we give thanks for God’s merciful compassion as we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Holy God, send out your church to cross boundaries for the sake of your holy compassion. Use our words and our actions to bring peace and wholeness to all people. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Bountiful God, all creation is a gift from you. Protect the earth from disaster and misuse. Free us from selfishness and help us to honor the bounty of nature, sharing our earthly home gently with one another and with future generations. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Liberating God, soften the hearts of rulers and governments. Strengthen the voices of those who cry out for freedom and opportunity for the overlooked, oppressed, and abused. Teach your people to speak peace to all people and nations. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Merciful God, give us faith and make us whole. Ease the anxiety of undiagnosed or chronic illness. Soothe the heartache of miscarriage or infertility. Look with compassion on all who cry to you for healing (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Mighty God, protect and bless all civil servants, local government officials, and members of the armed services who work for our safety and security. Help us to be thoughtful citizens and good neighbors in our community. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Immortal God, your mercies never end and your faithfulness is everlasting. Inspire us by the faith of the saints (*especially Catherine Winkworth and John Mason Neale*) to wait patiently for your salvation. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Gracious God, we lift to you these prayers and the prayers of our hearts, trusting in your everlasting love and mercy, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. The Spirit sends us forth to serve.

Thanks be to God.

Sunday, July 8, 2018

Lectionary 14

Prayer of the Day

God of the covenant, in our baptism you call us to proclaim the coming of your kingdom. Give us the courage you gave the apostles, that we may faithfully witness to your love and peace in every circumstance of life, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

First Reading: Ezekiel 2:1-5

In 597 BCE, the priest Ezekiel was removed into exile in Babylon. While there, he received a vision of God appearing majestically on a chariot throne. Today's reading recounts God's commissioning of Ezekiel during this vision. The prophet is to speak God's word to a people unwilling to hear.

¹[A voice] said to me: O mortal, stand up on your feet, and I will speak with you.²And when he spoke to me, a spirit entered into me and set me on my feet; and I heard him speaking to me. ³He said to me, Mortal, I am sending you to the people of Israel, to a nation of rebels who have rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have transgressed against me to this very day. ⁴The descendants are impudent and stubborn. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, "Thus says the Lord GOD."⁵Whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house), they shall know that there has been a prophet among them.

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 12:2-10

Christians do not boast of their own accomplishments. Rather, Christian boasting focuses attention on how the power of Christ is present in our lives, especially in times of weakness and vulnerability. No matter what our circumstances in life, Christ's grace is sufficient for us.

²I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows. ³And I know that such a person—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows—⁴was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat. ⁵On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. ⁶But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, ⁷even considering the exceptional character of the revelations. Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated.

⁸Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, ⁹but he said to me, "My

grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

Gospel: Mark 6:1-13

At home and abroad, Jesus and his disciples encounter resistance as they seek to proclaim God’s word and relieve affliction.

¹[Jesus] came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. ²On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, “Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! ³Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him. ⁴Then Jesus said to them, “Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house.” ⁵And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. ⁶And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Then he went about among the villages teaching. ⁷He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; ⁹but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. ¹⁰He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. ¹¹If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.” ¹²So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. ¹³They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Growing in faith and discipleship, we give thanks for God’s merciful compassion as we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Lord God, equip all your faithful people for the work of mission. When we are empty-handed, give us partners in ministry. Help us to speak boldly of your promises without reservation or fear. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Lord God, you breathe life into the dust of the earth. Bless the land and all who work it. Bring relief to areas of drought and famine. Send healing rains and cooling breezes to places scorched by sun and heat. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Lord God, when the nations are rebellious, raise up prophets and leaders to proclaim your way of justice. Provide for the needs of refugees, immigrants, asylum seekers, and exiles. Protect all who live in areas of war and conflict. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Lord God, your grace is sufficient to bring wholeness to human weakness. Restore hope to those suffering hardships, persecutions, and calamities. Strengthen all who are fragile in body, mind, or spirit (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Lord God, renew our commitment to the work of hospitality. Help us to offer a caring welcome to visitors and to those returning to the church. Help us to be living examples of your grace and your generosity. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Lord God, you equip disciples throughout the ages to proclaim your kingdom. Lead us by faith until every weakness of this world has been made perfect in the power of your everlasting glory. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Gracious God, we lift to you these prayers and the prayers of our hearts, trusting in your everlasting love and mercy, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. The Spirit sends us forth to serve.

Thanks be to God.

Sunday, July 15, 2018

Lectionary 15

Prayer of the Day

O God, from you come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works. Give to us, your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey your commandments; and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

First Reading: Amos 7:7-15

Amos was not the kind of prophet attached to temples or royal courts. Rather, he was an ordinary farmer from Judah (the southern kingdom) called by God to speak to Israel (the northern kingdom). God's word of judgment through Amos conflicted with the king's court prophet Amaziah, whom Amos encountered at Bethel.

⁷This is what [the Lord GOD] showed me: the Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand. ⁸And the LORD said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I

said, “A plumb line.” Then the Lord said,

“See, I am setting a plumb line
in the midst of my people Israel;
I will never again pass them by;

⁹the high places of Isaac shall be made desolate,
and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste,
and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.”

¹⁰Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to King Jeroboam of Israel, saying, “Amos has conspired against you in the very center of the house of Israel; the land is not able to bear all his words. ¹¹For thus Amos has said,

‘Jeroboam shall die by the sword,
and Israel must go into exile
away from his land.’ ”

¹²And Amaziah said to Amos, “O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, earn your bread there, and prophesy there; ¹³but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king’s sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom.”

¹⁴Then Amos answered Amaziah, “I am no prophet, nor a prophet’s son; but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees, ¹⁵and the LORD took me from following the flock, and the LORD said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel.’ ”

Second Reading: Ephesians 1:3-14

In Jesus, all of God’s plans and purposes have been made known as heaven and earth are united in Christ. Through Jesus, we have been chosen as God’s children and have been promised eternal salvation.

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, ¹²so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. ¹³In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; ¹⁴this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God’s own people, to the praise of his glory.

Gospel: Mark 6:14-29

As Jesus and his disciples begin to attract attention, Mark recalls the story of John the Baptist’s martyrdom. Like John, Jesus and his disciples will also suffer at the hands of those opposed to the gospel of salvation.

¹⁴King Herod heard of [the disciples' preaching,] for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him." ¹⁵But others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." ¹⁶But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."

¹⁷For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. ¹⁸For John had been telling Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." ¹⁹And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, ²⁰for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. ²¹But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. ²²When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it." ²³And he solemnly swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." ²⁴She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the baptizer." ²⁵Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." ²⁶The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. ²⁷Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, ²⁸brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. ²⁹When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Growing in faith and discipleship, we give thanks for God's merciful compassion as we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

God of truth, put your word of justice on our lips. Bless your church in the task of holy resistance. Make us a living and persistent sign of your righteousness and your lovingkindness. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of heaven and earth, pour your healing power upon our fragile earth for us and for all who will inherit it. Inspire the work of engineers and environmentalists who seek sustainable sources of energy, food, and clean water. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of justice, hold your plumb line to the nations. Speak convicting words of holy judgment to those in positions of authority. Redeem all harms caused by corruption and the hunger for power. Restore peace to our world (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of salvation, bring wholeness to all your beloved children. Anoint the hands of all caregivers, nurses, doctors, therapists, hospice workers, and chaplains. Bring abundance of life to all who long for healing (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of tenderness, you adopt us as your own. Help us to provide nourishing care for all children in our midst. Inspire us with their creativity and energy. Heal and protect children who are victims of abuse, neglect, or scorn. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of the saints, you have claimed the faithful departed as your own and given them an inheritance in glory. Sustain us in faith until the fullness of time, when you gather up all things in heaven and on earth. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Gracious God, we lift to you these prayers and the prayers of our hearts, trusting in your everlasting love and mercy, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. The Spirit sends us forth to serve.

Thanks be to God.

Sunday, July 22, 2018

Lectionary 16

Prayer of the Day

O God, powerful and compassionate, you shepherd your people, faithfully feeding and protecting us. Heal each of us, and make us a whole people, that we may embody the justice and peace of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

First Reading: Jeremiah 23:1-6

Jeremiah prophesied before the exile in 587 BCE. In this passage, he uses the metaphor of a shepherd to describe the bad kings who have scattered the “flock” of Israel. God promises to gather the flock and to raise up a new king from David’s line to save Israel and Judah.

¹Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the LORD.

²Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the LORD. ³Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. ⁴I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the LORD.

⁵The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: “The LORD is our righteousness.”

Second Reading: Ephesians 2:11-22

The author of this letter is reminding his audience that originally they were not part of God’s chosen people. Through Jesus’ death, however, they are included in God’s household of faith, whose cornerstone is Jesus Christ.

¹¹Remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called “the uncircumcision” by those who are called “the circumcision”—a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands—
¹²remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.
¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. ¹⁵He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. ¹⁷So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; ¹⁸for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, ²⁰built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. ²¹In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; ²²in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

Gospel: Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

When Jesus sent his disciples out to teach and heal, they ministered among large numbers of people. Their work was motivated by Christ’s desire to be among those in need.

³⁰The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. ³¹He said to them, “Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. ³²And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. ³³Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. ³⁴As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

⁵³When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. ⁵⁴When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, ⁵⁵and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Growing in faith and discipleship, we give thanks for God's merciful compassion as we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

God, you are our cornerstone, giving your people a strong foundation of faith. Help us to seek meaningful change in the world, and lead us to places of rest where you renew us for mission.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God, you are our shepherd, leading us to green pastures and still waters for our use and pleasure. Renew the face of the earth. Guard the land and seas, the mountains and valleys, cultivated farmland and untamed wilderness. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God, you are our righteousness, proclaiming peace to those who are far off and to those who are near. Remove hostility that divides nations. Make us no longer strangers or aliens but fellow citizens with all your saints. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God, you are our compassion, bringing rest to all who seek treatments and diagnoses and are left without answers or energy. Restore the aching souls and bodies of those who seek comfort (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God, you are our creativity, creating joy and purpose through all artists in the church: composers, writers, visual artists, musicians, poets, and dancers. Open our hearts to experience your truth in new and beautiful ways through their work. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God, you are our future, leading us through the valley of the shadow of death and preparing a table for us with all of your saints (*especially Mary Magdalene*). Let your goodness and mercy follow us until we dwell in your house forever. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Gracious God, we lift to you these prayers and the prayers of our hearts, trusting in your everlasting love and mercy, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. The Spirit sends us forth to serve.

Thanks be to God.

Sunday, July 29, 2018

Lectionary 17

Prayer of the Day

Gracious God, you have placed within the hearts of all your children a longing for your word and a hunger for your truth. Grant that we may know your Son to be the true bread of heaven and share this bread with all the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

First Reading: 2 Kings 4:42-44

Today's reading is part of a larger section of 2 Kings that describes the miracles of Elisha, the successor to Elijah. Here the prophet gives food to a hungry crowd. Though there is not enough food to go around, Elisha trusts God, who provides enough and even more to satisfy the need.

⁴²A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing food from the first fruits to [Elisha,] the man of God: twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. Elisha said, "Give it to the people and let them eat." ⁴³But his servant said, "How can I set this before a hundred people?" So he repeated, "Give it to the people and let them eat, for thus says the LORD, 'They shall eat and have some left.'"⁴⁴He set it before them, they ate, and had some left, according to the word of the LORD.

Second Reading: Ephesians 3:14-21

We have been rooted and grounded in the love of Christ, which surpasses all human knowledge. Because Christ dwells in our hearts, our lives are continuously strengthened and empowered by the ongoing presence of the Spirit.

¹⁴For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. ¹⁶I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, ¹⁷and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. ¹⁸I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

²⁰Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Gospel: John 6:1-21

In John's gospel, the miracles of Jesus are called "signs," because they reveal the true character of God. As such, they remain within the mystery of God and cannot be brought under human control.

¹Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. ²A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. ³Jesus went up the

mountain and sat down there with his disciples. ⁴Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. ⁵When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?” ⁶He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. ⁷Philip answered him, “Six months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.” ⁸One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, ⁹“There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?” ¹⁰Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. ¹¹Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹²When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, “Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.” ¹³So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. ¹⁴When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, “This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.”

¹⁵When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

¹⁶When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. ¹⁸The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. ¹⁹When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. ²⁰But he said to them, “It is I; do not be afraid.” ²¹Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land toward which they were going.

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Trusting in our loving and almighty God who abundantly provides the bread of life to all who hunger, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Loving God, we pray for all those who gather to celebrate the holy feast of Christ’s body and blood. Strengthen every member of your church in love, faith, and service. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Almighty God, we praise you for the beauty and abundance of your creation. Send sunshine and rain to nourish crops. Teach us to produce and distribute food with justice and generosity. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Loving God, you know every nation, every culture, and every people. Teach us to work together for peace and to love each other even when we cannot understand our neighbors. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Almighty God, you hear the cries of the hungry, the sick, and the downcast. Send food, healing, and comfort to all who are in need (*especially*). Satisfy the desire of every living thing. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Loving God, we thank and praise you for this congregation. Teach us to be a holy family, Christ's body to and for one another. Unite us in love and faith. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Almighty God, we thank and praise you for the beloved dead who taught and fed us in Christian faith (*especially Mary, Martha, and Lazarus of Bethany; and the martyr Olaf, king of Norway*). Hasten the feast that will reunite us. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Almighty and loving God, we look to you in hope and trust, knowing that you will do far more than we can ask or imagine, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. The Spirit sends us forth to serve.

Thanks be to God.

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