

5 PRAY THE PSALM OF THE WEEK Psalm 27:7-9, 1, 11-12

Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice! Alle- | luia.*
 Your face, Lord, I will seek. Do not hide Your face from me. Alle- | luia.
 The Lord is my light and my sal- | vation;*
 whom | shall I fear?
 The Lord is the strength | of my life;*
 of whom shall I | be afraid?
 Teach me Your | way, O Lord,*
 do not deliver me to the will of my adver- | saries;
 for false witnesses have risen a- | gainst me,*
 and such as breathe out | violence.

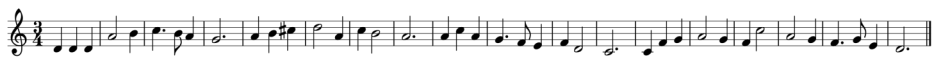
6 SAY TOGETHER THE VERSE OF THE WEEK Romans 8:37 (NKJV) “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”

7 READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DEVOTION (OTHER SIDE OF THE PAGE)

8 PRAY THE PRAYER OF THE WEEK Almighty, everlasting God, cause us always to have a devout will toward You and to serve Your majesty with a pure heart; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

9 PRAYER FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

10 SING OR SAY THE HYMN OF THE WEEK TLH 223 We Thank Thee, Jesus, Dearest Friend Unknown



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| <p>1. We thank Thee, Jesus, dearest Friend,
 That Thou didst into heaven ascend.
 O blessed Savior, bid us live
 And strength to soul and body give.
 Hallelujah!</p> <p>2. Ascended to His throne on high,
 Hid from our sight, yet always nigh;
 He rules and reigns at God's right hand
 And has all power at His command.
 Hallelujah!</p> | <p>4. We therefore heartily rejoice
 And sing His praise with cheerful voice;
 He captive led captivity,
 From bitter death He set us free.
 Hallelujah!</p> <p>5. Through Him we heirs of heaven are made;
 O Brother, Christ, extend Thine aid
 That we may firmly trust in Thee
 And through Thee live eternally.
 Hallelujah!</p> |
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“He Ascended to Bless His People”

1 BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

2 SAY THE APOSTLES' CREED I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

3 PRAY THE LORD'S PRAYER 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 and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

4 PRAY THE MORNING OR EVENING PRAYER

Morning. I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Evening. I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands, I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

THEME OF THE WEEK: He Ascended to Bless His People

This week after Ascension, we meditate on that which our risen and ascended Lord has given His Church to rejoice in, and what He has given His Church to do. The preaching of the Gospel has taken the place of the visible Christ and carries with it the full power of the Holy Spirit, through which Christ brings us to Himself, and Himself to us. Not only do we rejoice in Jesus' free forgiveness that is received by faith, but that forgiveness impels us to share that message with the world, even as Jesus has commanded His Church to make disciples by baptizing and teaching (Mt. 28).

SUN

SCRIPTURE: John 15:26-16:4 Life-Giving Spirit

Wherever Jesus is preached, wherever He is proclaimed as Lord and God who takes away the sins of the world by His death and resurrection, wherever this forgiveness is proclaimed and received by faith, there is the work of the Holy Spirit. In the readings for these last few Sundays, all from John 15 and 16, Jesus has been preparing His Church to recognize Him in a new way - through the preaching of the gospel. "But when the Helper comes...He will testify of Me." (vs. 26). Is your conscience burdened by sin and by the crosses of this life? Do you want the comfort and consolation of the Holy Spirit? Then listen to preaching.

Read your scriptures. There the Holy Spirit has promised to you. *Come, Holy Ghost creator blest! Amen.*

MON

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 93 Your King

A few weeks ago King Charles III was formally crowned as the monarch of Great Britain, with much fanfare and ceremony. Yet we in the old colonies here across the pond, having eschewed the monarchy in favor of a republic, still look on in curiosity and wonder. What would it be like to have a king, a sovereign lord? A domineering one is a great evil, true enough. But a good, pious, and just king? That would indeed be a joy. Christians sometimes forget that we in the Kingdom of God DO have a good King in our Lord Jesus, of which our psalm speaks. Not a king of some bit of land, but truly a king "*Pantocrator*," that is, "Almighty." His resurrection is not for Him, but for you. Your King. Your kingdom. *Lord, Thy kingdom come. Amen.*

TUE

SCRIPTURE: Acts 2:1-13 God's Love Goes OUT

After His resurrection from the dead, Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they received power from the Father (Acts 1:4). So it was that the small, nascent Church gathered there in the upper room, and by tongues of fire they are given utterance to preach the wonderful works of God. Not just in Jerusalem, but "to the end of the earth" (vs. 8). The thrust of the gospel is ever *outward*. Friends, this happens in miniature every Sunday. We are given the comfort of the gospel that we too would proclaim the wonders God has done for us. The thrust is still *outward*. Maybe your congregation is small. So was the upper room. The gospel we proclaim is the same. We go in the same power. But, gut check, do you act like it? *Lord, fill me with joy at Your gospel. Amen.*

WED

SCRIPTURE: Ezekiel 36:25-27 Eyes for God

"...I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols." (vs 25). The notion that baptismal waters cleanse us from all sin should be pretty familiar to us, but idols? The Lord promises here that in Baptism that we have been given a new heart, not made of stone but of flesh, that is, a heart that is made by and for God. Having a new heart we have new affections, new loves. We have no eyes for idols, for our lusts and wants and self-glorification, but only eyes for God. Now, for sure this human heart is never morally perfect this side of the resurrection, but even now the new creation begun in us is breaking forth. What idols do you serve that need smashed? What gets in the way of you loving God? *Lord, take away my idols. Amen.*

THU

SCRIPTURE: John 17:20-26 A Love Amazing

Being a sinner this side of glory, it's easy to fall into the trap of thinking that we are small and insignificant to God. God is utterly holy and He upholds the cosmos by the power of His word, so what do I matter to God? Sure, we might believe He cares for us, but does He really have time for us? Is He like a distant earthly father who has some affection for his child, but mostly can't be bothered with him? Listen closely to Jesus' words "I have declared your name...that the love with which You loved Me, may be in them, and I in them" (vs. 26). Catch that? The love with which the Father loves the Son, is the same love that the Father and the Son has for you. You can approach the Father just as the Son does. And He loves you the same. *Lord, I am Yours! Amen.*

FRI

SCRIPTURE: Romans 8:29-39 Losing the Big Picture

The influence of Christianity in the West is by all accounts waning, even as it is waxing in places like Africa and China. But this tendency has unnerved many Americans so that they are given to despair, to lament the future and pine for the "good old days." This is to act like soldiers on the field of a victorious battle who are yet unmanned by the actions of a few desperate enemy skirmishers. Friends, this is not the mind of Christ, or His Christians. "If God is for us, who can be against us?...[W]e are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." Evil will always oppose the Good. So don't be surprised! Love, fight, live like the victor that you are. Keep your joy! Christ is risen and you too shall reign. *Jesus, give me hope that I may serve You worthily. Amen.*

SAT

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 97 Strange Seeds

There is a curious turn of phrase at the end of this psalm. In verse 11 we read "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." As Jesus Himself teaches in the parables, sowing is the work of planters who scatter seed expecting a crop. But what do you get when seed is not sown, but "light" and "gladness?" As like begets like, then a little light bears more light. A little gladness bears more gladness. This is what Jesus has done in us by His gospel. He has sown His word in our hearts that we would go from strength to strength (Ps. 84:7) that we would see more and more of Him by His light, that His gladness, sown in miniature, would bear a harvest of joy for us, here in time, and there in eternity. *Lord, forgive my sins, that I would have joy! Amen.*

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