

Morning Prayer

Friday, September 23



Opening Sentence

The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him. *John 4:23*

Confession

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. *Amen.*

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. *Amen.*

Versicle and Response

Lord, open our lips.
And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be forever. Amen. Alleluia.

Antiphon

The mercy of the Lord is everlasting: Come let us adore him.

Jubilate

Be joyful in the Lord, all you lands;
serve the Lord with gladness
and come before his presence with a song.
Know this: the Lord himself is God;
he himself has made us, and we are his;
we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.
Enter his gates with thanksgiving;
go into his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and call upon his Name.

For the Lord is good;
his mercy is everlasting;
and his faithfulness endures from age to age.
The mercy of the Lord is everlasting: Come let us adore him.

Psalm 88 *Domine, Deus*

¹O Lord, my God, my Savior, *
by day and night I cry to you.
²Let my prayer enter into your presence; *
incline your ear to my lamentation.
³For I am full of trouble; *
my life is at the brink of the grave.
⁴I am counted among those who go down to the Pit; *
I have become like one who has no strength;
⁵Lost among the dead, *
like the slain who lie in the grave,
⁶Whom you remember no more, *
for they are cut off from your hand.
⁷You have laid me in the depths of the Pit, *
in dark places, and in the abyss.
⁸Your anger weighs upon me heavily, *
and all your great waves overwhelm me.
⁹You have put my friends far from me;
you have made me to be abhorred by them; *
I am in prison and cannot get free.
¹⁰My sight has failed me because of trouble; *
Lord, I have called upon you daily;
I have stretched out my hands to you.
¹¹Do you work wonders for the dead? *
will those who have died stand up and give you thanks?
¹²Will your loving-kindness be declared in the grave? *
your faithfulness in the land of destruction?
¹³Will your wonders be known in the dark? *
or your righteousness in the country where all
is forgotten?
¹⁴But as for me, O Lord, I cry to you for help; *
in the morning my prayer comes before you.
¹⁵Lord, why have you rejected me? *
why have you hidden your face from me?
¹⁶Ever since my youth, I have been wretched and at the
point of death; *
I have borne your terrors with a troubled mind.
¹⁷Your blazing anger has swept over me; *
your terrors have destroyed me;
¹⁸They surround me all day long like a flood; *
they encompass me on every side.
¹⁹My friend and my neighbor you have put away from me, *
and darkness is my only companion.

Gloria Patri

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost:
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be.
World without end. Amen. *Amen.*

The First Lesson

A reading from Judith 13:1-20

¹When evening came, his slaves quickly withdrew. Bagoas closed the tent from outside and shut out the attendants from his master's presence. They went to bed, for they all were weary because the banquet had lasted so long. ²But Judith was left alone in the tent, with Holofernes stretched out on his bed, for he was dead drunk.

³Now Judith had told her maid to stand outside the bedchamber and to wait for her to come out, as she did on the other days; for she said she would be going out for her prayers. She had said the same thing to Bagoas. ⁴So everyone went out, and no one, either small or great, was left in the bedchamber. Then Judith, standing beside his bed, said in her heart, 'O Lord God of all might, look in this hour on the work of my hands for the exaltation of Jerusalem. ⁵Now indeed is the time to help your heritage and to carry out my design to destroy the enemies who have risen up against us.'

⁶She went up to the bedpost near Holofernes' head and took down his sword that hung there. ⁷She came close to his bed, took hold of the hair of his head, and said, 'Give me strength today, O Lord God of Israel!' ⁸Then she struck his neck twice with all her might, and cut off his head. ⁹Next she rolled his body off the bed and pulled down the canopy from the posts. Soon afterwards she went out and gave Holofernes' head to her maid, ¹⁰who placed it in her food bag.

Then the two of them went out together, as they were accustomed to do for prayer. They passed through the camp, circled around the valley, and went up the mountain to Bethulia, and came to its gates. ¹¹From a distance Judith called out to the sentries at the gates, 'Open, open the gate! God, our God, is with us, still showing his power in Israel and his strength against our enemies, as he has done today!'

¹²When the people of her town heard her voice; they hurried down to the town gate and summoned the elders of the town. ¹³They all ran together, both small and great, for it seemed unbelievable that she had returned. They opened the gate and welcomed them. Then they lit a fire to give light and gathered around them. ¹⁴Then she said to them with a loud voice, 'Praise God, O praise him! Praise God, who has not withdrawn his mercy from the house of Israel but has destroyed our enemies by my hand this very night!'

¹⁵Then she pulled the head out of the bag and showed it to them, and said, 'See here, the head of Holofernes, the commander of the Assyrian army, and here is the canopy beneath which he lay in his drunken stupor. The Lord has struck him down by the hand of a woman. ¹⁶As the Lord lives, who has protected me on the way I went, I swear that it was my face that seduced him to his destruction, and that he committed no sin with me, to defile and shame me.'

¹⁷All the people were greatly astonished. They bowed down and worshipped God, and said with one accord, 'Blessed are you our God, who have this day humiliated the enemies of your people.'

¹⁸Then Uzziah said to her, 'O daughter, you are blessed by the Most High God above all other women on earth; and blessed be the Lord God, who created the heavens and the earth, who has guided you to cut off the head of the leader of our enemies. ¹⁹Your praise will never depart from the hearts of those who remember the power of God. ²⁰May God grant this to be a perpetual honor to you, and may he reward you with blessings, because you risked your

own life when our nation was brought low, and you averted our ruin, walking in the straight path before our God.' And all the people said, 'Amen. Amen.'

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 10 The Second Song of Isaiah *Quaerite Dominum*

Isaiah 55:6-1

Seek the Lord while he wills to be found; *
call upon him when he draws near.
Let the wicked forsake their ways *
and the evil ones their thoughts;
And let them turn to the Lord, and he will have compassion, *
and to our God, for he will richly pardon.
For my thoughts are not your thoughts, *
nor your ways my ways, says the Lord.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth, *
so are my ways higher than your ways,
and my thoughts than your thoughts.
For as rain and snow fall from the heavens *
and return not again, but water the earth,
Bringing forth life and giving growth, *
seed for sowing and bread for eating,
So is my word that goes forth from my mouth; *
it will not return to me empty;
But it will accomplish that which I have purposed, *
and prosper in that for which I sent it.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. *Amen.*

The Second Lesson

A reading from Acts 19:21-41

²¹Now after these things had been accomplished, Paul resolved in the Spirit to go through Macedonia and Achaia, and then to go on to Jerusalem. He said, "After I have gone there, I must also see Rome." ²²So he sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he himself stayed for some time longer in Asia. ²³About that time no little disturbance broke out concerning the Way. ²⁴A man named Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the artisans. ²⁵These he gathered together, with the workers of the same trade, and said, "Men, you know that we get our wealth from this business. ²⁶You also see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost the whole of Asia this Paul has persuaded and drawn away a considerable number of people by saying that gods made with hands are not gods. ²⁷And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be scorned, and she will be deprived of her majesty that brought all Asia and the world to worship her." ²⁸When they heard this, they were enraged and shouted, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" ²⁹The city was filled with the confusion; and people rushed together to the theater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul's travel companions. ³⁰Paul wished to go into the crowd, but the disciples would not let him; ³¹even some officials of the province of Asia, who were friendly to him, sent him a message urging him not to venture into the theater. ³²Meanwhile, some were shouting one thing, some another; for the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had

come together. ³³Some of the crowd gave instructions to Alexander, whom the Jews had pushed forward. And Alexander motioned for silence and tried to make a defense before the people. ³⁴But when they recognized that he was a Jew, for about two hours all of them shouted in unison, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" ³⁵But when the town clerk had quieted the crowd, he said, "Citizens of Ephesus, who is there that does not know that the city of the Ephesians is the temple keeper of the great Artemis and of the statue that fell from heaven? ³⁶Since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash. ³⁷You have brought these men here who are neither temple robbers nor blasphemers of our goddess. ³⁸If therefore Demetrius and the artisans with him have a complaint against anyone, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls; let them bring charges there against one another. ³⁹If there is anything further you want to know, it must be settled in the regular assembly. ⁴⁰For we are in danger of being charged with rioting today, since there is no cause that we can give to justify this commotion." ⁴¹When he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 18 A Song to the Lamb *Dignus es*

Revelation 4:11; 5:9-10, 13

Splendor and honor and kingly power *
are yours by right, O Lord our God,
For you created everything that is, *
and by your will they were created and have their being;
And yours by right, O Lamb that was slain, *
for with your blood you have redeemed for God,
From every family, language, people, and nation, *
a kingdom of priests to serve our God.
And so, to him who sits upon the throne, *
and to Christ the Lamb,
Be worship and praise, dominion and splendor, *
forever and forevermore.

The Gospel

The Gospel according to Luke 4:31-37

³¹He went down to Capernaum, a city in Galilee, and was teaching them on the sabbath. ³²They were astounded at his teaching, because he spoke with authority. ³³In the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, ³⁴"Let us alone! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." ³⁵But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" When the demon had thrown him down before them, he came out of him without having done him any harm. ³⁶They were all amazed and kept saying to one another, "What kind of utterance is this? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and out they come!" ³⁷And a report about him began to reach every place in the region.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. *Amen.*

The Prayers

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Let us 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.*

The Suffrages

Save your people, Lord, and bless your inheritance;
Govern and uphold them, now and always.
Day by day we bless you;
We praise your Name forever.
Lord, keep us from all sin today;
Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy.
Lord, show us your love and mercy;
For we put our trust in you.

In you, Lord, is our hope;
And we shall never hope in vain.

A Collect for Fridays

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. *Amen.*

A Collect for Mission

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So, clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your Name. *Amen.*

Collect of Commemoration

God of liberating power, who called Thecla to proclaim the gospel and did not permit any obstacle or peril to inhibit her: Empower courageous evangelists among us, that men and women everywhere may know the freedom that you offer us in Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. *Amen.*

Trinity Cycle of Prayer

Joanie McCoy and Loni Hulse

Let us pray now for our own needs and those of others.

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. *Amen.*

Benediction

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. *Amen. 2 Corinthians 13:14*

The Commemoration

Thecla was a saint of the early Christian Church, and a reported follower of Paul the Apostle. The earliest record of her life comes from the ancient apocryphal *Acts of Paul and Thecla*. According to the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, Thecla was a young noble virgin who listened to Paul's "discourse on virginity" and became Paul's follower and a Disciple of Paul's teachings and Ministry. Thecla's mother and her fiancé Thamyris became concerned Thecla would follow Paul's demand "one must fear only one God and live in chastity" and punished both Paul and Thecla.

Thecla was miraculously saved from burning at the stake by the onset of a storm and traveled with Paul to Antioch of Pisidia. There a nobleman named Alexander desired Thecla and attempted to take her by force. Thecla fought him off, assaulting him in the process, and was put on trial for assaulting a nobleman. She was sentenced to be eaten by wild beasts but was again saved by a series of miracles when the female beasts protected her against her male aggressors.

Thecla gained a massive "cult-like" following and became perhaps the most prominent figure for female empowerment at the time. She listened to Paul's teachings to fear nobody but God and live in chastity. She demonstrates these teachings on several occasions starting from the first time she heard Paul speak by leaving Thamyris, fighting off Alexander, and surviving several life-threatening situations. She traveled to preach the word of God and became an icon encouraging women to also live a life of chastity and follow the word of the Lord.