

Morning Prayer

Wednesday, March 12



Opening Statement

Rend your hearts and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and repents of evil. *Joel 2:13*

Confession of Sin

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.*

The Invitatory

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 for ever. Amen.

Antiphon

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy:
Come let us adore him.

Psalm 63:1-8 *Deus, Deus meus*

O God, you are my God; eagerly I seek you; *
my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you,
as in a barren and dry land where there is no water.
Therefore I have gazed upon you in your holy place, *
that I might behold your power and your glory.
For your loving-kindness is better than life itself; *
my lips shall give you praise.
So will I bless you as long as I live *
and lift up my hands in your Name.

My soul is content, as with marrow and fatness, *
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips,
When I remember you upon my bed, *
and meditate on you in the night watches.
For you have been my helper, *
and under the shadow of your wings I will rejoice.
My soul clings to you; *
your right hand holds me fast.
The Lord is full of compassion and mercy:
Come let us adore him.

Psalm 119:49-72

Zayin *Memor esto verbi tui*

⁴⁹ Remember your word to your servant, *
because you have given me hope.
⁵⁰ This is my comfort in my trouble, *
that your promise gives me life.
⁵¹ The proud have derided me cruelly, *
but I have not turned from your law.
⁵² When I remember your judgments of old, *
O Lord, I take great comfort.
⁵³ I am filled with a burning rage, *
because of the wicked who forsake your law.
⁵⁴ Your statutes have been like songs to me *
wherever I have lived as a stranger.
⁵⁵ I remember your Name in the night, O Lord, *
and dwell upon your law.
⁵⁶ This is how it has been with me, *
because I have kept your commandments.

Heth *Portio mea, Domine*

⁵⁷ You only are my portion, O Lord; *
I have promised to keep your words.
⁵⁸ I entreat you with all my heart, *
be merciful to me according to your promise.
⁵⁹ I have considered my ways *
and turned my feet toward your decrees.
⁶⁰ I hasten and do not tarry *
to keep your commandments.
⁶¹ Though the cords of the wicked entangle me, *
I do not forget your law.
⁶² At midnight I will rise to give you thanks, *
because of your righteous judgments.
⁶³ I am a companion of all who fear you; *
and of those who keep your commandments.
⁶⁴ The Earth, O Lord, is full of your love; *
instruct me in your statutes.

Teth *Bonitatem fecisti*

⁶⁵ O Lord, you have dealt graciously with your servant, *
according to your word.

⁶⁶ Teach me discernment and knowledge, *
for I have believed in your commandments.

⁶⁷ Before I was afflicted I went astray, *
but now I keep your word.

⁶⁸ You are good and you bring forth good; *
instruct me in your statutes.

⁶⁹ The proud have smeared me with lies, *
but I will keep your commandments
with my whole heart.

⁷⁰ Their heart is gross and fat, *
but my delight is in your law.

⁷¹ It is good for me that I have been afflicted, *
that I might learn your statutes.

⁷² The law of your mouth is dearer to me *
than thousands in gold and silver.

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 Old Testament Lesson

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy 9:13-21

¹³Furthermore the Lord said to me, "I have seen that this people is indeed a stubborn people. ¹⁴Let me alone that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will make of you a nation mightier and more numerous than they." ¹⁵So I turned and went down from the mountain, while the mountain was ablaze; the two tablets of the covenant were in my two hands. ¹⁶Then I saw that you had indeed sinned against the Lord your God, by casting for yourselves an image of a calf; you had been quick to turn from the way that the Lord had commanded you. ¹⁷So I took hold of the two tablets and flung them from my two hands, smashing them before your eyes. ¹⁸Then I lay prostrate before the Lord as before, forty days and forty nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all the sin you had committed, provoking the Lord by doing what was evil in his sight. ¹⁹For I was afraid that the anger that the Lord bore against you was so fierce that he would destroy you. But the Lord listened to me that time also. ²⁰The Lord was so angry with Aaron that he was ready to destroy him, but I interceded also on behalf of Aaron at that same time. ²¹Then I took the sinful thing you had made, the calf, and burned it with fire and crushed it, grinding it thoroughly, until it was reduced to dust; and I threw the dust of it into the stream that runs down the mountain.
The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Canticle 16 The Song of Zechariah

Benedictus Dominus Deus

Luke 1:68-79

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; *
he has come to his people and set them free.
He has raised up for us a mighty savior, *
born of the house of his servant David.
Through his holy prophets he promised of old,
that he would save us from our enemies, *
from the hands of all who hate us.
He promised to show mercy to our fathers *
and to remember his holy covenant.
This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham, *
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
Free to worship him without fear, *
holy and righteous in his sight
all the days of our life.
You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, *
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
To give his people knowledge of salvation *
by the forgiveness of their sins.
In the tender compassion of our God *
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the
shadow of death, *
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. *Amen.*

The New Testament Lesson

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews 3:12-19

¹²Take care, brothers and sisters, that none of you may have an evil, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹³But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," so that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴For we have become partners of Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end. ¹⁵As it is said, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." ¹⁶Now who were they who heard and yet were rebellious? Was it not all those who left Egypt under the leadership of Moses? ¹⁷But with whom was he angry forty years? Was it not those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, if not to those who were disobedient? ¹⁹So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Canticle J A Song of Judith

Judith 16:13-16

I will sing a new song to my God, *
for you are great and glorious, wonderful in strength, invincible.
Let the whole creation serve you, *
for you spoke and all things came into being.

You sent your breath and it formed them, *
no one is able to resist your voice.
Mountains and seas are stirred to their depths, *
rocks melt like wax at your presence.
But to those who fear you, *
you continue to show mercy.
No sacrifice, however fragrant, can please you, *
but whoever fears the Lord shall stand in your sight for ever.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. *Amen.*

The Gospel

A reading from the Gospel according to John 2:23-3:15

²³When he was in Jerusalem during the Passover festival, many believed in his name because they saw the signs that he was doing. ²⁴But Jesus on his part would not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people ²⁵and needed no one to testify about anyone; for he himself knew what was in everyone.

¹Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ²He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." ³Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." ⁴Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" ⁵Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' ⁸The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So, it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." ⁹Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" ¹⁰Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? ¹¹Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹²If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

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

God be with you.
And also with you.
Let us pray.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on Earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. *Amen.*

Suffrages

Show us your mercy, O Lord;
And grant us your salvation.

Clothe your ministers with righteousness;
Let your people sing with joy.

Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;
For only in you can we live in safety.

Lord, keep this nation under your care;
And guide us in the way of justice and truth.

Let your way be known upon Earth;
Your saving health among all nations.

Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;
Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

Create in us clean hearts, O God;
And sustain us with your Holy Spirit.

The Collect of the Day

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan; Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

A Collect for Mission

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Collect of Commemoration

Almighty and merciful God, you raised up Gregory of Rome to be a servant of the servants of God, and inspired him to send missionaries to preach the Gospel to the English people: Preserve your Church in the catholic and apostolic faith they taught, that your people, being fruitful in every good work, may receive the crown of glory that never fades away; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Trinity Cycle of Prayer

Chris Tyree

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.

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. *Amen. Romans 15:13*

The Commemoration

Only two popes, Leo I and Gregory I, have been given the popular title of "the Great." Both served during difficult times of barbarian invasions in Italy; and during Gregory's term of office, Rome was also faced with famine and epidemics.

Manuscript illumination of Gregory the Great Gregory was born around 540 of a politically influential family, and in 573 he became Prefect of Rome; but shortly afterwards he resigned his office and began to live as a monk. In 579 he was made apocrisiarius (representative of the Pope to the Patriarch of Constantinople). Shortly after his return home, the Pope died of the plague, and in 590 Gregory was elected Pope.

Like Leo before him, he became practical governor of central Italy, because the job needed to be done and there was no one else to do it. When the Lombards invaded, he organized the defense of Rome against them, and the eventual signing of a treaty with them. When there was a shortage of food, he organized the importation and distribution of grain from Sicily.

His influence on the forms of public worship throughout Western Europe was enormous. He founded a school for the training of church musicians, and Gregorian chant (plainchant) is named for him. The schedule of Scripture readings for the various Sundays of the year, and the accompanying prayers (many of them written by him), in use throughout most of Western Christendom for the next thirteen centuries, is largely due to his passion for organization. His treatise, *On Pastoral Care*, while not a work of creative imagination, shows a dedication to duty, and an understanding of what is required of a minister in charge of a Christian congregation. His sermons are still readable today, and it is not without reason that he is accounted (along with Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine of Hippo) as one of the Four Latin Doctors (=Teachers) of the ancient Church. (Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzen, Basil the Great, and John Chrysostom are the Four Greek Doctors.)

English-speaking Christians will remember Gregory for sending a party of missionaries headed by Augustine of Canterbury (not to be confused with the more famous Augustine of Hippo) to preach the Gospel to the pagan Anglo-Saxon tribes that had invaded England and largely conquered or displaced the Celtic Christians previously living there. Gregory had originally hoped to go to England as a missionary himself, but was pressed into service elsewhere, first as apocrisiarius and then as bishop of Rome. He accordingly sent others, but took an active interest in their work, writing numerous letters both to Augustine and his monks and to their English converts.

I here mention something that was not Gregory's doing but is an important part of Church history. It was in Gregory's lifetime that Rome, and with it the Western Empire, with astonishing suddenness, and for no reason that I know of, went monolingual. For more than six centuries previously, Greek had been spoken at Rome along with Latin. Every Roman with pretensions to being educated could speak it. Everyone involved in shipping and commerce, from banker to stevedore, could speak it. The list of the early Bishops of Rome has a fair proportion of Greek names. When Paul wrote an epistle to the Romans, he wrote in Greek as a matter of course. But in Gregory's lifetime this changed. Gregory was ambassador to the Eastern Patriarch at Constantinople for six years, but he never bothered to learn Greek. And in his day (not, as far as I have any reason to believe, as a result of his example or influence) most other Latin-speakers did not trouble to learn Greek either. The already existing difficulties of communication between Latin and Greek theologians were greatly exacerbated by this

development. Increasingly, Latins did not read the commentaries and other writings of Greek Christians, and vice versa. Thus, differences between the two that dialogue might have resolved were left to accumulate, culminating in the formal split between Latin and Greek Christendom in 1054.

If I were to select a ground on which this devout Christian of great accomplishments might reasonably be censured, it would be that his Dialogues, a book on the Lives of the Saints, is full of accounts of dreams and visions that various persons were said to have had of souls in Purgatory. Gregory, a man of keen critical judgement on many matters, was completely uncritical in his acceptance of these stories. A general belief in Purgatory was standard among Christians when he wrote, but his reliance on "ghost stories" to fill in the imaginative details gave the doctrine as held thereafter in Latin Christendom both a prominence and a coloring that it had not previously had, with results that many Christians, including adherents of the Pope, have thought regrettable.