



Sunday, August 2, 2020

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost, Year A

Introduction

In today's first reading God invites all who are hungry or thirsty to receive food and drink without cost. Jesus feeds the hungry multitude and reveals the abundance of God. At the eucharistic table we remember all who are hungry or poor in our world today. As we share the bread of life, we are sent forth to give ourselves away as bread for the hungry.

WELCOME

This is the day the Lord has made.

We will rejoice and be glad in it.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, whose steadfast love is everlasting, whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation.

Amen.

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Reconciling God,

we confess that we do not trust your abundance, and we deny your presence in our lives. We place our hope in ourselves and rely on our own efforts. We fail to believe that you provide enough for all. We abuse your good creation for our own benefit. We fear difference and do not welcome others as you have welcomed us. We sin in thought, word, and deed. By your grace, forgive us; through your love, renew us; and in your Spirit, lead us; so that we may live and serve you in newness of life.

Amen.

Beloved of God, by the radical abundance of divine mercy we have peace with God

through + Christ Jesus, through whom we have obtained grace upon grace. Our sins are forgiven. Let us live now in hope. For hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Glorious God, your generosity waters the world with goodness, and you cover creation with abundance. Awaken in us a hunger for the food that satisfies both body and spirit, and with this food fill all the starving world; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

First Reading: Romans 9:1-5

This begins a new section in Paul's letter in which he will deal with the place of Israel in God's saving plan. He opens by highlighting how Israel's heritage and legacy include being God's children, having God's covenants, being given God's law, participating in worship of God, and receiving divine promises.

1I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit—2I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. 4They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; 5to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel: Matthew 14:13-21

After John the Baptist is murdered, Jesus desires a time of solitude. Still, his compassion for others will not allow him to dismiss those who need him, and he is moved to perform one of his greatest miracles.

Now when Jesus heard [about the beheading of John the Baptist], he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. 14When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. 15When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." 16Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." 17They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." 18And he said, "Bring them here to me." 19Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. 20And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. 21And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

GOSPEL MESSAGE

Unreasonable Love

Imagine throwing an impromptu dinner party for thousands of people. Looking out at the huge crowd, would you think, “Yeah, we can do this. It’ll be fun!”? Or would you look in your fridge, cupboards, and freezer and become absolutely certain there was not enough to go around?

It is normal and human to look at the supplies available and make a judgment about whether or not something can be accomplished. It’s reasonable, even! But God’s kingdom is not reasonable. God’s kingdom defies all of our human expectations. It is not reasonable that the last shall be first. It is not reasonable that God would pour forgiveness on us when we hardly know how to confess. It is not reasonable that the disciples could feed thousands of people with just a few loaves and fishes.

Thanks be to God for the unreasonable, unexpected grace we find in the kingdom! May we brim with gratitude that where we see limits, God knows what is possible. When we stare in shock at the Son of God nailed to the cross, we are sure it’s the end of the story, but God knows differently: love and life are unreasonably more abundant than hatred and death.

When we bring whatever “loaves and fishes” we have in our cupboards to God, God blesses them and makes of them enough. At the Lord’s table, we find the mystery of Christ’s abundant presence in the bread and the wine. At the font, we are joined to the immeasurable, eternal covenant of being God’s beloved through the profuse waters of baptism. It’s preposterous, really, how lavishly, how unreasonably God loves the world! Let us rejoice in God’s unreasonable love and mercy, and join the feast.

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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 into hell.

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**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Confident of your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

You take resources that appear to be meager, bless them, and there is enough. May your church trust that what you bless and ask us to share with the world is abundantly sufficient. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Your bountiful creation offers sustenance and life for all creatures. Protect this abundance for the well-being of all. Reverse the damage we have caused your creation. Replenish ground water supplies, provide needed rains in places of drought, and protect forests from wildfires. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

You offer yourself to all the nations and peoples of the earth, inviting everyone to abundant life. Bring the prophetic vision to fullness, that all nations will run to you and that nations who do not know you will find their joy in you. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

You open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. Hear the anguish of tender hearts who cry to you in suffering and satisfy their deepest needs. Bring wholeness and healing to those who suffer in body, heart, soul, and mind (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

You offer freely the fullness of salvation. Give our congregation such a welcoming heart, that our words and actions may extend your free and abundant hospitality to all whom we encounter. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Accept our thanksgiving for the people you surround us with, especially for those who celebrate their lives and birth this week enrich them with a sense of your joy and grace for yet another year. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Save us from ourselves, from racism, from white supremacy in all its hidden forms, from hollow words without actions, forgive us, renew us, call us to action. Grant wisdom, give us courage for the coming days. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

For those fighting cancer and other serious illnesses, grant strength and grace. We pray for doctors, nurses, technicians, researchers and all who work toward treatments and cures. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

For those we know and love who serve in our military and their families. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

For the protection of firefighters and police officers, for our President, and all our elected officials, national, state and local leaders, that through their wisdom, insight and patience, peace and justice prevail throughout the world. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

For all those who are dealing with the COVID-19 coronavirus around the world: those who are infected, those caring for them, those trying to mitigate and manage the epidemic, and those who are living in fear of it. May God bless us all with healing and hope. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You gather your saints as one, united in the body of Jesus. Bring us with all your saints to the heavenly banquet. We remember with love and thanksgiving the saints we have known (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

OFFERING PRAYER

God of goodness and growth,
all creation is yours,
and your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.
Water and word, wine and bread:
these are signs of your abundant grace.
Nourish us through these gifts,
that we might proclaim your steadfast love
in our communities and in the world,
through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song.

Amen.

Please, remember that we depend on our offerings, even when there is no on site worship services due to extreme circumstances.

BLESSING

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers,
nor things present, nor things to come,
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.
God, the creator, + Jesus, the Christ,

and the Holy Spirit, the comforter,
bless you and keep you in eternal love.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.

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Feasting on the Word: **DAILY PRAYERS**

Household Prayer: Morning

God of daybreak, thank you for holding me through the night
and awakening me to behold your likeness in this brand-new day.
Go with me now as I walk with you.
Show me the world and its people
through your eyes of compassion.
Bless me, break me, and move through me
to heal and feed those who hunger for you. Amen.

or

Holy One,
as I walk through this new day,
help me to see each experience
as an opportunity to reflect on what it means to be your servant
and a chance to help Jesus feed those in need,
guided by your steadfast love for me. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

O God, tonight I lay my failures, anxieties,
struggles, and unfinished business at your feet.
Hold me, bless me, and change me as I rest in you. Amen.

or

Gracious God, thank you for being with me throughout this day.
As night falls, I give this day back to you,
trusting in you and in your unearned gift of grace
to give me peace and rest,
for you are just in all your ways
and kind in all your doings. Amen.