

Lenten Morning Prayer

Feast of the Annunciation of Our Lord (March 25th)

March 26, 2025

Opening Sentence

Officiant 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*

The Confession

Officiant 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.

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

The Invitatory and Psalter

Officiant Lord, open our lips.

People ***And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.***

Officiant and People ***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.***

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

Jubilate *Psalm 100*

**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.**

Canticle 15 The Song of Mary *Magnificat*

**My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.**

**From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.**

**He has mercy on those who fear him
in every generation.**

**He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.**

**He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.**

**He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.**

**He has come to the help of his servant Israel,
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,**

**The promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children 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 Lessons

A Reading from the Book of Hebrews

Hebrews 10: 4-10

It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,

“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me;
in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure.

Then I said, ‘See, God, I have come to do your will, O God’
(in the scroll of the book it is written of me).”

When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), then he added, “See, I have come to do your will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Canticle 14 A Song of Penitence**Kyrie Pantokrator***Prayer of Manasseh, 1-2, 4, 6-7, 11-15*

O Lord and Ruler of the hosts of heaven,
God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,
and of all their righteous offspring:

You made the heavens and the earth,
with all their vast array.

All things quake with fear at your presence;
they tremble because of your power.

But your merciful promise is beyond all measure;
it surpasses all that our minds can fathom.

O Lord, you are full of compassion,
long-suffering, and abounding in mercy.

You hold back your hand;
you do not punish as we deserve.

In your great goodness, Lord, you have promised forgiveness to sinners,
that they may repent of their sin and be saved.

And now, O Lord, I bend the knee of my heart,
and make my appeal, sure of your gracious goodness.

I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned,
and I know my wickedness only too well.

Therefore I make this prayer to you:
Forgive me, Lord, forgive me.

Do not let me perish in my sin,
nor condemn me to the depths of the earth.

For you, O Lord, are the God of those who repent,
and in me you will show forth your goodness.

Unworthy as I am, you will save me, in accordance with your great mercy,
and I will praise you without ceasing all the days of my life.

For all the powers of heaven sing your praises,
and yours is the glory to ages of ages. Amen.

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

Gospeller The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke. *Luke 1: 26-38*
People ***Glory to you, Lord Christ.***

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Reflection

Today's feast commemorates how God made known to a young Jewish woman that she was to be the mother of his Son, and how Mary accepted her vocation with perfect conformity of will. It has been said, "God made us without us, and redeemed us without us, but cannot save us without us." Mary's assent to Gabriel's message opened the way for God to accomplish the salvation of the world. It is for this reason that all generations are to call her "blessed."

The Annunciation has been a major theme in Christian art, in both East and West. Innumerable sermons and poems have been composed about it. The term coined by Cyril of Alexandria for the Blessed Virgin, Theotokos ("the God-bearer"), was affirmed by the General Council of Ephesus in 431.

Mary's self-offering in response to God's call has been compared to that of Abraham, the father of believers. Just as Abraham was called to be the father of the chosen people, and accepted his call, so Mary was called to be the mother of the faithful, the new Israel. She is God's human agent in the mystery of the Incarnation. Her response to the angel, "Let it be to me according to your word," is identical with the faith expressed in the prayer that Jesus taught, "Your will be done on earth as in heaven."

Gerard Manley Hopkins, comparing Mary to the air we breathe, writes:

Wild air, world-mothering air ...
Of her flesh he took flesh:
He does take fresh and fresh,
Though much the mystery how,
Not flesh but spirit now,
And makes, O marvellous!
New Nazareths in us,
Where she shall yet conceive
Him, morning, noon, and eve,
New Bethlems, and he born
There, evening, noon, and morn—

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

Officiant The Lord be with you.

People ***And also with you.***

Officiant Let us pray.

***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, for ever and ever. Amen.

V. Show us your mercy, O Lord;

R. ***And grant us your salvation.***

V. Clothe your ministers with righteousness;

R. ***Let your people sing with joy.***

V. Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;

R. ***For only in you can we live in safety.***

V. Lord, keep this nation under your care;

R. ***And guide us in the way of justice and truth.***

V. Let your way be known upon earth;

R. ***Your saving health among all nations.***

V. Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;

R. ***Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.***

V. Create in us clean hearts, O God;

R. ***And sustain us with your Holy Spirit.***

The Collect of the Day

Officiant Pour your grace into our hearts, O Lord, that we who have known the incarnation of your Son Jesus Christ, announced by an angel to the Virgin Mary, may by his cross and passion be brought to the glory of his resurrection; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. ***Amen.***

Prayers of Intercession and Thanksgiving

Officiant 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.***

Spiritual Communion

Let us pray together a prayer for Spiritual Communion:

Lord Jesus, we believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. We are grateful to know there are many ways to experience your presence, but in whatever way we do, we know you come into our hearts, minds and souls. Unite my heart with those of my family of faith and make us all one with you. May this spiritual communion strengthen my faith and grant me confidence in your loving care now and forever. Amen.

The General Thanksgiving

Officiant Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks
for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us
and to all whom you have made.
We bless you for our creation, preservation,
and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for your immeasurable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.
And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies,
that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,
not only with our lips, but in our lives,
by giving up ourselves to your service,
and by walking before you
in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory throughout all ages. **Amen.**

Officiant Let us bless the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Officiant 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.**

Bible Study

Gospel: Luke 15: 1-3, 11b-32

All the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to Jesus. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

So Jesus told them this parable:

"There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am

dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.'" So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe--the best one--and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

"Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

Reflection on Luke 15: 1-3, 11b-32

Today, we have one of the most famous parables in the entire Bible. It's the story of the man with two sons. It is one of Jesus' most original tales. We normally refer to it as the Parable of the Prodigal Son or sometimes as the story of the Forgiving Father. Actually, it could better and more properly be called the Parable of the Prodigal Father. His prodigality (lavishness) is much more evident than is that of his son. The father was extremely prodigal with his money when he so easily handed it over to his wayward son. Generally the inheritance would have been conferred on him only after his father's death. The father's "prodigality" is also shown in his total forgiveness if his son when at last he decided to return. It's one of Sacred Scripture's most wonderful commentaries on the relationship of God to his people.

No one is rotten to the core. Every person instinctively responds to God's call. There is no helpless soul, for the soul is God's implanted hope. Jesus sees promise in his strange friends; He was not blind to their needs. The prodigal son, the tax collector and the sinners were in fact lost ones. But Jesus befriends them; He comes in search of the sinners, awaiting their return. God has become incarnate to seek us in our looseness. He comes out like a Father who waits for the return of his beloved son. God's love is so great, His forgiveness is unbelievable. It defeats all human calculations. God wants to reclaim every prodigal son and rejoice over him at his return. But do we ever take the risk and pain of going to the other side of the track when we falter? Can we, like the prodigal son, make a return to the Father?

As we read again this parable of divine mercy and forgiveness, we are reminded of the lyrics of a modern religious song: “I have loved you with an everlasting love. I have loved you and you are mine.” We may have spent much time, effort and money getting ourselves into trouble as did the son in today’s parable. Regardless, we can be assured that God will gladly spend much more to get us out of it. He is truly a Prodigal Father to us all.

Questions to ponder:

How do you interpret the term ‘Prodigal Father’ in your words?

Have you ever been in such experience?

Is your love unconditional?