

Each of us is our brother's (and sister's) keeper. Today we hear God calling us to be responsible for each other. No one should be left on their own to fail; we are called to pick each other up, to help each other out. This Labor Day weekend, when we honor all those who work to do the things that contribute to society, whether in a factory, on a farm, in an office, at home, or wherever it may be, let us resolve to work together in building the kingdom of God.

As we gather together let us begin our service by professing what we believe.

*Profession of Faith: p. 108*

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (bow as we say) and by the Holy Spirit he was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

*Introductory Rite:*

*Greeting:*

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God forever. **Blessed be God forever.**

*Penitential Rite:*

My brothers and sisters, to prepare ourselves for this celebration, let us call to mind our sins.

Lord Jesus, you are the rock of our salvation: Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are the shepherd who cares for his flock: Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are the way to salvation: Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

*Opening Prayer:*

O God, by whom we are redeemed and receive adoption, look graciously upon your beloved sons and daughters, that those who believe in Christ may receive true freedom and an everlasting inheritance. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

*Liturgy of the Word:*

*First Reading p. 48*

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel

*Ezekiel 33:7-9*

Thus says the LORD: You, son of man, I have appointed watchman for the house of Israel; when you hear me say anything, you shall warn them for me. If I tell the wicked, "O wicked one, you shall surely die," and you do not speak out to dissuade the wicked from his way, the wicked shall die for his guilt, but I will hold you responsible for his death. But if you warn the wicked, trying to turn him from his way, and he refuses to turn from his way, he shall die for his guilt, but you shall save yourself.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God**

Responsorial Psalm: p. 48

Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9

R/. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

**R/. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.**

Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD; let us acclaim the rock of our salvation.

Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us joyfully sing psalms to him. **R/.**

Come, let us bow down in worship; let us kneel before the LORD who made us.

For he is our God, and we are the people he shepherds, the flock he guides. **R/.**Oh, that today you would hear his voice: "Harden not your hearts as at Meribah, as in the day of Massah in the desert, where your fathers tempted me; they tested me though they had seen my works." **R/.**Second Reading p. 50

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Romans 13:8-10

Brothers and sisters: Owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no evil to the neighbor; hence, love is the fulfillment of the law.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**Gospel p. 50

18:15-20

Matthew

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

**Glory to you, Lord**

Jesus said to his disciples: "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won over your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that 'every fact may be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell the church. If he refuses to listen even to the church, then treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector. Amen, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again, amen, I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**Reflection on the Word:

Last week we heard Jesus tell his disciples that those who wish to follow him must first take up their cross. One of these crosses is to take the responsibility to hold others accountable. Whether it is individually, like Ezekiel, or with a community, like the early church in Matthew, we are obligated to call others to account when they act unjustly or unmercifully. It can be difficult to correct a subordinate, awkward to correct a peer, and scary to correct a leader. But we are called to do so, out of love for our neighbor, so that a conversion of heart may take place.

If you love your neighbor as yourself, as Saint Paul reminds the Romans that as Christians they are called to do, at the very least you will treat your neighbor the way you would want to be treated yourself. Therefore, he can say that

Christians fulfill all the commandments, the entire law, by following this one principal command. Neither religious nor political authorities could find fault in that.

It is alarming to hear Jesus tell the disciples that if a sinner “refuses to listen even to the church, then treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector” (Matthew 18:17). Is Jesus telling his disciples to exclude sinners, just as society treats outsiders and collaborators? No, quite the opposite! Jesus has already extended his mission into Gentile territory and welcomed tax collectors into his fold. Jesus does not tell them to treat sinners as the Pharisees treat Gentiles and tax collectors, but as *you* would treat Gentiles and tax collectors. Jesus trusted that his disciples realized the goal is always reconciliation, not exclusion.

**Question of the Week:** What can I do to reconcile with someone whom I or others have excluded?

**Prayer of the Faithful:**

Trusting in God’s care, we bring our needs and the needs of our neighbor before the Lord.

- For the Church, that we may reach out and assist our neighbors in reconciling with God and each other, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our pray.**
- For leaders of nations, that they may grow in wisdom, seeking peaceful ways to resolve differences with others as they serve the people entrusted to them, let us pray to the Lord.
- For those given authority to uphold and enforce the law, that they may respect those they serve and apply the law with justice and compassion, let us pray to the Lord.
- For those who work for a living, that they may receive a just wage for their labors, and for those who are unemployed or underemployed, that they may not lose heart, let us pray to the Lord.
- That our parish community may always welcome those whose souls are thirsting for spiritual nourishment and those whose hearts are searching for reconciliation, let us pray to the Lord.
- For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord.

Loving God, grant us the will to listen for your voice and the grace to recognize it as we strive to follow you. Hear the prayers we offer and grant them according to your will, through Christ our Lord.

**Communion Rite**

**The Lord’s Prayer: Page 140**

Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us.

**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.**

**Rite of Peace:**

The sign of peace outwardly expresses a deep spiritual reality; through this sign we acknowledge Christ’s presence in each other and share the peace we have received from Him. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

**Communion:**

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

**Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.**

The body of Christ. **Amen.**

*Prayer after Communion:*

Grant that your faithful, O Lord, whom you nourish and endow with life through the food of your Word and heavenly Sacrament, may so benefit from your beloved Son's great gifts that we may merit an eternal share in his life.

Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen**

*Concluding Rite:*

*Final Blessing:*

May the Lord bless us,  protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

Go in the peace of Christ! **Thanks be to God.**