

“Seek the LORD while he may be found, call him while he is near,” Isaiah counsels us in the first words from today’s first reading. We come together today to seek the Lord in word and sacrament, knowing that he can be found in scripture, in the Eucharist, and in each other. We call to him now, lifting our voices in song and prayer, aware of his closeness as we are gathered two or more in his name.

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 everlasting source of mercy and forgiveness: Lord have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you are the Word made flesh: Christ have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you are the way that leads to eternal happiness: 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, who founded all the commands of your sacred Law upon love of you and our neighbor, grant that, by keeping your precepts, we may merit to attain eternal life.

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. 56*

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

*Isaiah 55:6-9*

Seek the LORD while he may be found, call him while he is near. Let the scoundrel forsake his way, and the wicked his thoughts; let him turn to the LORD for mercy; to our God, who is generous in forgiving. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways above your ways and my thoughts above your thoughts.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God**

Responsorial Psalm: p. 52

*Psalm 145: 2-3, 8-9, 17-18*

R/. The Lord is near to all who call upon him.

**R/. The Lord is near to all who call upon him.**

Every day I will bless you, and I will praise your name forever and ever. Great is the LORD and highly to be praised; his greatness is unsearchable. **R/**.

The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness. The LORD is good to all and compassionate toward all his works. **R/**.

The LORD is just in all his ways and holy in all his works. The LORD is near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth. **R/**.

Second Reading p. 56

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians

*Philippians 1:20c-24, 27a*

Brothers and sisters: Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me life is Christ, and death is gain. If I go on living in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. And I do not know which I shall choose. I am caught between the two. I long to depart this life and be with Christ, for that is far better. Yet that I remain in the flesh is more necessary for your benefit.

Only, conduct yourselves in a way worthy of the gospel of Christ.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

Gospel p. 58

*Matthew 20:1-16a*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

**Glory to you, Lord**

Jesus told his disciples this parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out at dawn to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with them for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. Going out about nine o’clock, the landowner saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and he said to them, ‘You too go into my vineyard, and I will give you what is just.’ So they went off. And he went out again around noon, and around three o’clock, and did likewise. Going out about five o’clock, the landowner found others standing around, and said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’ They answered, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You too go into my vineyard.’ When it was evening the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Summon the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and ending with the first.’ When those who had started about five o’clock came, each received the usual daily wage. So when the first came, they thought that they would receive more, but each of them also got the usual wage. And on receiving it they grumbled against the landowner, saying, ‘These last ones worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who bore the day’s burden and the heat.’ He said to one of them in reply, ‘My friend, I am not cheating you. Did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what is yours and go. What if I wish to give this last one the same as you? Or am I not free to do as I wish with my own money? Are you envious because I am generous?’ Thus, the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Reflection on the Word:**

“It’s not fair!” We sympathize with the laborers who worked all day only to find out that they made not a penny more than those who worked for only an hour. This is an obvious injustice. What’s the point of having a “daily wage” and an “hourly wage” if the numbers are the same? In the first reading we hear the LORD tell Isaiah, “my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways” (Isaiah 55:8). Yes, from our perspective the landowner’s arrangement is unfair and the consequences for the hardest workers is an injustice. But our perspective is flawed. God, source of infinite love, infinite mercy, and infinite generosity, sees this arrangement much differently. May we be humbled by Isaiah’s reminder.

“Because no one has hired us” (Matthew 20:7). This is the response of the laborers who were still standing around at five o’clock. Why hasn’t anyone hired these workers? Perhaps they were injured, weak, or disabled. Perhaps they were lazy or uncooperative. Quite likely they were already rejected by every other landowner. But not this one. The kingdom of heaven welcomes even those who have been rejected, who have been waiting, who did not bear the heavy burden. God’s mercy and acceptance are unrestricted.

Saint Paul was in prison when he wrote the selection we hear today, unsure of what would come next. His conversion had come some twenty years earlier, around noon if one were to apply today’s Gospel story to his life. In the twenty years since his conversion he had made three missionary journeys, carrying the gospel to Gentile lands from Corinth to Antioch, through dozens of towns in between. He was ready to meet the Lord, if that was his fate, but more than willing to continue his ministry if allowed to do so. Whatever happened, he would magnify Christ in his person as he increased the body of Christ, the church.

**Question of the Week:** How can I magnify Christ in myself? How can I imitate God’s generosity?

**Prayer of the Faithful:**

Trusting in our generous God to respond to our needs from early in our lives until the very end, we make our prayers now to the Lord.

- For the Church, that we may strive always to conduct ourselves in a way worthy of the gospel of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- For political leaders at every level, that they may be compassionate to those who are most vulnerable, to those who have been overlooked or forgotten, let us pray to the Lord.
- For those who work in fields, on farms, and in vineyards, harvesting the food we eat, that they may be rewarded generously for their labor, let us pray to the Lord.
- For our Jewish friends and neighbors, whose celebration of Rosh Hashanah, the new year, ends Sunday (today), 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.

Generous God, you lavish us with your infinite love as we gather in your name around this table. Listen to our needs and grant them, we pray, through the greatest expression of your love, your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

**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:***

Graciously raise up, O Lord, those you renew with this Sacrament, that we may come to possess your redemption both in mystery and in the manner of our life.

Through Christ our Lord. **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.**