

Suggested Opening Song: We Are the Light of the World, #188

In today's Gospel, Jesus challenges us as his disciples to deny ourselves, take up our crosses, and follow him. None of these actions is easy. To put God's will before our own, to willingly accept what will make us suffer, and to follow someone who was put to death on the cross, is very difficult. But we will not be alone, for Jesus is with us as we follow him. Also, as he tells us in the Beatitudes, our reward will be great in heaven. Let us realize his real presence as we celebrate and receive the Eucharist.

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

Profession of Faith p. 142

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: p. 10

Brothers and sisters, let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to participate in this sacred celebration.

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

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

Opening Prayer:

God of might, giver of every good gift, put into our hearts the love of your name, so that, by deepening our sense of reverence, you may nurture in us what is good and, by your watchful care, keep safe what you nurtured.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

*Liturgy of the Word:**First Reading* p. 80

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah

Jeremiah 20:7-9

You duped me, O LORD, and I let myself be duped; you were too strong for me, and you triumphed. All the day I am an object of laughter; everyone mocks me.

Whenever I speak, I must cry out, violence and outrage is my message; the word of the LORD has brought me derision and reproach all the day.

I say to myself, I will not mention him, I will speak in his name no more. But then it becomes like fire burning in my heart, imprisoned in my bones; I grow weary holding it in, I cannot endure it.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9

R/. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

R/. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

O God, you are my God whom I seek; for you my flesh pines and my soul thirsts like the earth, parched, lifeless and without water. **R/.**

Thus have I gazed toward you in the sanctuary to see your power and your glory, for your kindness is a greater good than life; my lips shall glorify you. **R/.**

Thus will I bless you while I live; lifting up my hands, I will call upon your name. As with the riches of a banquet shall my soul be satisfied, and with exultant lips my mouth shall praise you. **R/.**

You are my help, and in the shadow of your wings I shout for joy. My soul clings fast to you; your right hand upholds me. **R/.**

Second Reading

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Romans 12:1-2

I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Matthew 16:21-27

Glory to you, Lord

Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer greatly from the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised. Then Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him, "God forbid, Lord! No such thing shall ever happen to you." He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do."

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life? For the Son of Man will come with his angels in his Father's glory, and then he will repay all according to his conduct."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection on the Word:

- Who can really blame Peter for saying what he felt? He loves Jesus, has just proclaimed him Christ and Lord, and probably expects him to take the throne of David when they get to Jerusalem, but now is hearing that Jesus is going to be killed when they get there. He will not let that happen! But none of them understand that this is Jesus' mission. They are, as Jesus says, "thinking not as God does, but as human beings do" (Matthew 16:23). As we are human beings ourselves, limited by human thinking, we also wish that our own mission was easy and safe. But it is not. It requires denying our desires and carrying our crosses, no matter how difficult or scary. In baptism, we were marked with the sign of the cross. As disciples, we are called to live that out.
- Though we cannot know the mind of God or think as God does, Saint Paul prays that the Romans "may discern what is the will of God" (Romans 12:2). To do this, Paul tells them, "Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind" (12:2). In this age, as in Paul's, we are tempted to conform ourselves to conventional wisdom or popular opinion. Saint Peter wanted Jesus to conform himself to their expectations, but he refused to do so. Yes, we must be willing to resist societal pressure and think differently to discern the will of God.
- Some of the words Jesus says to Peter—"Get behind me," "You are an obstacle"—we would do well to keep in mind ourselves (Matthew 16:23). As disciples, we should be getting behind Jesus, following him wherever he leads us, carrying our crosses, as he did his. We should also avoid being obstacles to others on their faith journeys. Then we can look forward to one day being repaid for our sacrifice when Jesus comes again in glory.

Question of the Week

When have I been reluctant or unable to resist pressure to conform to society's expectations?

Prayer of the Faithful:

Trusting in God's mercy and love, let us give voice to our needs and those of our brothers and sisters.

- For the Church, that we may be faithful in following the Lord through times of trial and temptation, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For world leaders, that they may respect the freedom of all people to worship and follow their faith, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For the courage and wisdom necessary to make the changes required to keep this planet, our common home, livable for people of all nations, especially those most vulnerable to pollution, natural disasters, and rising sea levels, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For those who educate students at every level about our faith, bearing witness to their own faith as they teach scripture, doctrine, and morality, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- That those who are having difficulty accepting or carrying their crosses may find in our faith community a source of strength and mutual assistance, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For what else should we pray? Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- 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. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

God of all consolation, help us discern your will as we carry our crosses in solidarity with our sisters and brothers on our journey to you. Hear this and all our prayers through the One who redeemed us by his cross, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer: p. 176

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.

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:

Renewed by this bread from the heavenly table, we beseech you, Lord, that, being the food of charity, it may conform our hearts and stir us to serve you in our neighbor.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Concluding Rite:

Final Blessing:

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

Go in peace! **Thanks be to God.**

Suggested Closing Song: Seek Ye First, #159