Suggested Opening Song: We Gather Together, #144

As we gather to celebrate the Eucharist, let us give God thanks for second chances. All of us fail sometimes, maybe quite often. But this does not mean that we are condemned forever, unable to overcome our faults and past sins. We are constantly invited to repent, seek forgiveness, and change our behavior. Saint Paul, who knew a thing or two about doing all this, calls upon us to reject selfishness and instead look out for the interests of others. Let us pray today for a change of heart that will lead us to more closely follow the road to God's kingdom.

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:
O God, who manifest your almighty power above all by pardoning and showing mercy, bestow, we pray, your grace abundantly upon us and make those hastening to attain your promises heirs to the treasures of heaven.

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. 94
A reading from the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel *Ezekiel 18:25-28*

Thus says the LORD: You say, "The LORD's way is not fair!" Hear now, house of Israel: Is it my way that is unfair, or rather, are not your ways unfair? When someone virtuous turns away from virtue to commit iniquity, and dies, it is because of the iniquity he committed that he must die. But if he turns from the wickedness he has committed, he does what is right and just, he shall preserve his life; since he has turned away from all the sins that he has committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

Responsorial Psalm: *Psalm 25: 4-5, 8-9, 10, 14*
R/. Remember you mercies, O Lord.
R/. Remember your mercies, O Lord.

Your ways, O LORD, make known to me; teach me your paths,
guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior. **R/.**

Remember that your compassion, O LORD, and your love are from of old.
The sins of my youth and my frailties remember not;
in your kindness remember me, because of your goodness, O LORD. **R/.**

Good and upright is the LORD; thus he shows sinners the way.
He guides the humble to justice, and teaches the humble his way. **R/.**

Second Reading
A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians *Philippians 2:1-11*

Brothers and sisters: If there is any encouragement in Christ, any solace in love, any participation in the Spirit, any compassion and mercy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing. Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but also for those of others.

Have in you the same attitude that is also in Christ Jesus, Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel *Matthew 21: 28-32*
A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew **Glory to you, Lord**

Jesus said to the chief priests and elders of the people: "What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He came to the first and said, 'Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.' He said in reply, 'I will not, ' but afterwards changed his mind and went. The man came to the other son and gave the same order. He said in reply, 'Yes, sir, ‘but did not go. Which of the two did his father's will?" They answered, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Amen, I say to you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you. When John came to you in the way of

righteousness, you did not believe him; but tax collectors and prostitutes did. Yet even when you saw that, you did not later change your minds and believe him."

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

Reflection on the Word:

- To understand Ezekiel's assertions in the first reading, it helps to see God as the source of light and life. When we act virtuously, we are turned toward the source of light and life, enjoying the ability to see and to thrive. But when we commit sin, we turn away from God, stepping at once into darkness. We cannot use all the good things we did in the past to offset our sin any more than the person plunged into darkness can use their time living in the light to light up the darkness. However, we *can* do what the second person in Ezekiel's example did, turn away from darkness and back to righteousness and justice, receiving the mercy God always stands ready to offer.

- Saint Paul tells the early Christian community in Philippi (scripture scholars believe this to be one of his earliest letters) to "have in you the same attitude that is also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). He goes on to write that Jesus emptied himself to serve others and followed the Father's will all the way to his execution on the cross. So too must we serve others, accept God's will for our lives, and carry our crosses. May we adopt the same attitude as Jesus so that we can be Christ for others, sharing God's mercy and love with others.

- If we remember from last week, a day's work in the vineyard is exhausting. Hard labor in the hot sun from sunup to sundown is a difficult way to spend your day. It is not a huge surprise that one of the sons immediately says no. It is also unsurprising that the other son, after saying yes, changes his mind. But it is the first son who has a change of heart, who opens his heart to his father's will and works in the vineyard that day. As this is a parable of the kingdom of God, it is God asking us to work in the vineyard that is the world. Even if it seems too much for us to accept at first, God patiently waits for us to have a change of heart, to subordinate our own wills to God's, as we pray in the Lord's Prayer, and commit to do God's will here on earth.

Question of the Week
To what have I said no recently that I regret now? How can I turn around and make up for that?

Prayer of the Faithful:
United in heart with Christians around the world, let us give voice to our hopes and needs.

- For the Church, that in being a sign of Christ to the world we may empty ourselves and be the servant of all, obedient always to God's will, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For leaders in government and business, that they may be willing to change their minds like the first son in today's Gospel as they better discern what is right and just, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For migrants, refugees, and all who are displaced by war, hunger, or persecution, that they may be kept safe on their journeys, as the Holy Family was two thousand years ago, let us pray to the Lord.
  Lord, hear our prayer.

- For a growing realization of the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death, and for greater assistance for the most vulnerable, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For those who have willfully turned away from what is right and just, that we may always stand ready and willing to welcome them back, 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.**

O God of righteousness, God of justice, help us to see those virtues more clearly and choose them even if not right away, especially if we have first turned away. Grant this and all our prayers through the One who never tired of welcoming sinners to the table, 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:
May this heavenly mystery, O Lord, restore us in mind and body, that we may be coheirs in glory with Christ, to whose suffering we are united whenever we proclaim his Death.

Who lives and reigns forever and ever. **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: God of Day and God of Darkness, #214, Vs. 1 and 3