

# The Congregation at Prayer

A Guide for Daily Meditation and Prayer  
 For the Week of the Fourth Sunday in Lent/Laetare Sunday  
 March 22, through March 29, 2020

**Catechesis Notes for the Week — Psalm 74—The Prayer of the Church During Pestilence and When Persecutors Seek to Destroy Her**—Psalm 74 is a prayer against those who attack the Church and try to destroy the sanctuary of the Lord where His people gather to worship. How strangely and eerily appropriate this psalm is for our current crisis. On the one hand, the civil authorities are trying to protect the population from the spread of disease; on the other hand, enemies of the Gospel would like to use the crisis to destroy the Church. The psalm begins with the questions, “O God, why have You cast us off forever? Who does Your anger smoke against the sheep of Your pasture? Remember Your congregation, which You have purchased of old...” Psalm 74 is an example of how the circumstances of life provide the proper interpretation of the psalm: “The enemy has damaged everything in the sanctuary. Your enemies roar in the midst of Your meeting place...They said in their hearts, ‘Let us destroy them altogether.’ They have burned up all the meeting places of God in the land.” This devastating description of the Church under siege is quickly followed by our cry to the Lord to take action and remember His promises for the sake of His congregation: “The day is yours, the night also is Yours; You have prepared the light and the sun. You have set all the borders of the earth; You have made summer and winter. Remember this, that the enemy has reproached, O Lord... Oh, do not deliver the life of Your turtledove to the wild beast! ... Arise, O God, plead Your own cause...” Sometimes we are prone to imagine that the Church has never endured the kinds of distress that we experience in the world today. It is not true. At times like these, we commend ourselves and the world to the mercy of God in Christ, take up God’s Word daily, and pray the psalms most fervently.

## The Order of Meditation and Prayer

Pray and confess out loud as much from the order of meditation and prayer as you are able, or as your family size and ages dictate. Learn by heart the verse, catechism, and hymn of the week.

## Theme: Christ alone Our Souls Will Feed!

### Invocation

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

### Apostles’ Creed

Verse: Luke 10:2

The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few;  
 therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.

Psalm 74 and/or the appointed daily psalms listed below.

**Prayer on the Psalm:** Almighty God, our heavenly Father, deliver us from every enemy of Your Church. Give us quiet confidence in Your Word alone and firm resolve to confess Christ by what we say and how we live. Grant us to know with certainty that that the gates of hell cannot prevail against Your Church, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Daily Psalms	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning	85	88	89	91	92	95, 96	98, 100	101
Evening	86	87	90	93	94	97	99	102

### Bible Readings for the Week:

	Bible Narrative	Second Reading
Sunday	<b>Lent 4:</b> The Feeding of the 5,000—John 6:1-15	
Monday	Jesus Is Anointed at Bethany—John 12:1-11	Deuteronomy 15:7-11
Tuesday	Palm Sunday—John 12:12-26	Psalm 118:1-20
Wednesday	<b>Midweek Passion: Jesus Before Pontius Pilate</b> —Matt. 27:11-31	Isaiah 50:4-9
Thursday	<b>The Annunciation of Our Lord:</b> Luke 1:26-38	
	Jesus Washes the Disciples’ Feet—John 13:1-20	Exodus 40:1-33
Friday	A New Commandment Is Given—John 13:21-38	Psalm 41
Saturday	Lent 5: The Sacrifice of Isaac—Genesis 22:1-14	Hebrews 9:11-15

### The Catechism: What the Hearers Owe Their Pastors (Second Half)

(Preschool children and everyone, review the primary texts of the fourth, fifth, and sixth commandments)

**Honor your father and your mother.**

**You shall not murder.**

**You shall not commit adultery.**

What does God’s Word say the hearers of God’s Word owe their pastors?  
 We ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you,  
 who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you.

First Grade +  
 1 Thessalonians 5:12

Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.	Second Grade + 1 Thessalonians 5:13
Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.	Third Grade + Hebrews 13:17

**Prayers: Catechism Prayers, In Our Prayers at Peace, and the Collect for the Week**

**Prayer for Hearers of God's Word:**

*O Lord Jesus, we give thanks to You for the gift of pastors who preach Your saving Gospel and administer Your life-giving sacraments to us. Crucify our flesh and destroy all impenitence and unbelief in us, so that we who have received faithful instruction in the Word of God might provide generously for the support of our pastors. Teach us to believe that our pastors, who faithfully sow the seed and tread out the grain of Your Word, are worthy of their wages and are entitled to reap from what they have sown. Teach us to believe that preaching and teaching Your Word is the most important work that our pastors do, so that we might honor and support them in this work, live together with them in the peace of Your forgiveness, and hold them in the highest regard in love for the sake of the Gospel; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

**In Our Prayers this Week**

**Baptismal Birthdays:** Dorothy Muenzmaier (3/25); Ann Carus (3/26).

**The newly baptized:** Martin Elmer Gehlbach (3/21) and Keith Luke Voss (3/22)

**Repentance of heart** in the face of pestilence

**The sick:** Jeremy LaFore suffering with ALS; infant Mason Perez, awaiting a heart transplant;

Walter Schmudlach, with inoperable tumor; David Berger in rehab for brain injury;

**In hospice care:** Kurt Scheler

**Collect for the week of the Fourth Sunday in Lent/ Laetare Sunday:**

*Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Your mercies are new every morning; and though we deserve only punishment, You receive us as Your children and provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant that we may heartily acknowledge Your merciful goodness, give thanks for all Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

**Collect for The Annunciation of Our Lord (March 25)**

*O Lord, as we have known the incarnation of Your Son, Jesus Christ, by the message of the angel to the virgin Mary, so by the message of His cross and passion bring us to the glory of His resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

**Lord's Prayer and Morning or Evening Prayer from the Catechism**

**Hymn of the Week**

**"God Loved the World So That He Gave" (stanzas 1 and 4)**

**LSB 571**

<b>Looking forward to Judica Sunday— The Fifth Sunday in Lent</b>	<b>March 29, 2020</b>
<b>Hymns: 438, 430, 564, 428, 429, 431</b>	
<p><b>Genesis 22:1-14:</b> Abraham was called by God away from idolatry to be the "father of many nations." The Lord promised Abraham that in his Seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed. The Lord called Abraham to faith and made this promise to him when he was 75 years old. He and Sarah had to wait for 25 years before Isaac was born. Although it appeared as if the son of the promise would never be born and that it was impossible for a woman of Sarah's age to ever have a baby, Isaac was finally born when Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90! The Lord kept His promise! It was a miracle of God's grace. Now, in the Old Testament reading for Lent 5, Abraham is called to sacrifice the very son for whom he had waited for so long. By the call to sacrifice Isaac, "your only son whom you love," the Lord reveals that Abraham's faith was, indeed, in God's promise alone! Because of the promise, Abraham knew and believed that even if Isaac were to be put to death, he would rise from the dead, because God had promised: "In your Seed ALL the nations of the earth would be blessed." The years of waiting had been used by God to convince Abraham that the Lord NEVER breaks His promise, and that the miracle of salvation depends entirely upon the Lord and His Word. Even if Isaac dies, he correctly reasoned, according to the promise he MUST live again. So much of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is revealed in this event: The object of the Christian faith is the promise of salvation in Christ; Abraham is a picture of God the Father who sacrifices His only Son whom He loves for us; the Son of the Promise would bring about the blessing of salvation by being sacrificed in our place; the Ram caught in the thicket continues the theme of substitutionary atonement..</p> <p><b>Hebrews 9:11-15:</b> The apostle declares that Jesus is not only the faithful High Priest of a better and eternal covenant of redemption, but that He is also the very sacrifice for sin Himself.</p> <p><b>John 8:42-59:</b> Jesus teaches us that Abraham longed to see the fulfillment of God's promise in the sending forth of God's eternal Son. In this Gospel, Jesus clearly confesses that He is the eternal Son of the Father by applying the divine name given at the burning bush to Himself: "Before Abraham was I AM." This is why the Jews took up stones to stone Him. They believed He was committing blasphemy by applying the divine name to Himself. By this action they showed that they did not love God or His Son whom the Father had sent. Jesus said, "He who is of God, hears God's words ... if anyone keeps My word, he shall never see death."</p>	