

The Congregation at Prayer

A Guide for Daily Meditation and Prayer

For the Fourth Sunday after Trinity

July 2 through July 9, 2023

Catechesis Notes for the Week — Faith in the Midst of Unbelief — This week’s biblical narratives from Matthew and Luke illustrate the dramatic contrast between faith in Christ and unbelief. The week begins with the story of the **Visitation** in which Mary, newly pregnant with Jesus, visits her cousin Elizabeth who is six months pregnant with John the Baptist. Both women are filled with the Holy Spirit and joyful penitent faith in the Lord. Mary’s famous greeting, the Magnificat, confesses her total devotion to the Lord, her Savior. Elizabeth’s prophecy, “Blessed are you among women...” and the infant John leaping for joy in her womb, highlight not only the presence of faith in Christ, but also the joy and peace that such faith brings to sinners. In contrast, the ongoing stories from Matthew begin with Jesus’ call out of unbelief to faith, in **Jesus Preaches Repentance and Faith**. The woes spoken to Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum warn of the impending doom for those who reject Jesus. Yet the Gospel teaches that the sinner who is burdened and heavy laden finds his comfort and rest in Jesus’ mercy. In **Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath**, Jesus teaches the self-righteous Pharisees that true rest is found in what He does for sinners, rather than in what sinners do for God. Jesus desires to give God’s mercy and not to receive our sacrifices. In **Jesus Heals on the Sabbath**, He not only teaches that it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath, but that God’s divine service of goodness and mercy to us is the source of true Sabbath rest. The unbelief and hardness of heart toward Jesus is on display in the accusation levelled against Jesus that He cast out demons by the power of Satan rather than by the power of God. But Jesus’ reply, a **House Divided Cannot Stand**, teaches us that it is by the Spirit of God that Jesus delivers from the power of Satan and establishes God’s kingdom of grace. To use the Words of the Catechism, “I cannot by my own reason or strength believe, but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel...” Where is true faith found? According to Jesus, a **Tree is Known by its Fruit**, and the fruit of true repentance and faith is in the words of a sincere confession of sin and faith in God’s mercy. The week concludes with the **Parable of the Sower and the Seed** in which Jesus teaches us that the miracle of faith is made possible by the Word of God alone which He, the faithful Sower, plants in the soil of our hearts.

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: Judge Not, and You Shall Not Be Judged!

Invocation

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

Apostles’ Creed

Verse: Romans 12:14-15

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

Psalms 138 and/or the appointed daily psalms listed below.

Prayer on the Psalm: I will praise You with my whole heart, O Lord, for when I hear the words of Your mouth, I am filled with the joy of Your salvation. Though I walk in the midst of trouble, revive me, stretch out Your hand and save me for Your mercy endures forever and You will not forsake those who are the work of Your hands; in Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Daily Psalms	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning	112, 113	115	117, 118	119:1-24	119:49-72	119:89-112	119:137-152	122, 123
Evening	114	116	120, 121	119:25-48	119:73-88	119:113-136	119:153-176	124

Bible Readings for the Week:

	Bible Narrative	Second Reading
Sunday	Trinity 4: “Be merciful...”—Luke 6:36-42 The Visitation: Luke 1:39-45	
Monday	Jesus Preaches Repentance and Faith—Matthew 11:20-30	Isaiah 28:16-19
Tuesday	Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath—Matthew 12:1-8	Isaiah 29:13-24
Wednesday	Jesus Heals on the Sabbath—Matthew 12:9-21	Isaiah 30:15-22
Thursday	A House Divided Cannot Stand—Matthew 12:22-32	Isaiah 31:1-9
Friday	A Tree Is Known by Its Fruit—Matthew 12:33-50	Isaiah 32:1-8
Saturday	The Parable of the Sower and the Seed—Matthew 13:1-9	Isaiah 33:1-6

The Catechism: The Lord's Prayer— The Fifth Petition

<p>What is the Fifth Petition? And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.</p>	Preschool +
<p>What does this mean? We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look at our sins, or deny our prayer because of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, but we ask that He would give them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. So we too will sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us.</p>	Second Grade +

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

Prayer on the Fifth Petition

Heavenly Father, forgive us our trespasses. Do not look upon our sins or deny any of our prayers because of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, but we ask that You would give them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. Grant us Your forgiveness, so that we, too, will sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Collect for the Fourth Sunday after Trinity

O Lord, grant that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by Your governance that Your Church may joyfully serve You in all godly quietness; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Collect for the Visitation

Almighty God, You chose the virgin Mary to be the mother of Your Son and made known through her Your gracious regard for the poor and lowly and despised. Grant that we may receive Your Word in humility and faith, and so be made one with Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

In Our Prayers this Week (include the petitions below followed by the Lord's Prayer)

Baptismal Anniversaries: Robin Theilacker (7/2), Sandy Lueck (7/3), Rosie Koplring (7/6), Anders Rhode (7/8).
Those Who Serve in the Military: Jessica Franklin (Air Force); John Franklin (Minnesota National Guard); Evon Ingraham (Army Reserves); Robert Haga (the Marines); Morgan Thoni (Navy); David Uttenreither (Army).
The Sick: Chuck Finke, Wally Schneider and David Berger recovering from surgery; Andy Helwig awaiting liver transplant; Walt Dissen in rehab; Mark Gretzinger suffering with chronic pain.
Those in Cancer Treatment: Cheryl Wallace (daughter of Larry and Sharon Martin) undergoing tests for melanoma; Rev. Dr. John Wille, Kathleen Hetzel, Tanya Knoblock, Dennis Michaelis, Gabby Hartwig, Peyton Locklair, Kathy Miller, Donna Lovas's niece Beth, and Heather Peters.

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

Hymn of the Week

"O God, My Faithful God"

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Looking forward to the Fifth Sunday after Trinity

July 9, 2023

Hymns: 682, 688, 856, 641, 454, 718

I Kings 19:11-21: *The prophet Elijah is shown by the Lord that the Lord's greatest power and glory will be demonstrated in the "still small voice" of His Word that preaches salvation to the poorest and lowliest sinner. So it is for us, in the time of faith, this earthly life, the Lord comes to us in His Word. Unlike Satan, He does not force Himself upon us in an oppressive and coercive way; He speaks to us, calling us to repentance and faith that He might bestow upon us the freedom of life with God through the forgiveness of all our sins.*

I Corinthians 1:18-25: *"Christ crucified" is what the true Church of God and her ministers preach. This means that we believe in the God who became man and died for our sins. This means that we preach what is considered "foolish" and a "stumbling block" to the unbelieving world, namely, that salvation is a gift of God's grace alone through the death of His Son for all those who believe without distinction.*

Luke 5:1-11: *By a great miracle, Jesus called four fishermen to be fishers of men in token that the Gospel must be preached to the four corners of the earth. Peter, on behalf of all ministers, rightly confessed "we have toiled ... and caught nothing; nevertheless, at Your Word" we will preach the Gospel. This miraculous sign gave Peter a deep sense of his own sinfulness. The minister of the Gospel has no strength apart from the Word he is called to preach. But this Word is all-sufficient for the task at hand. "To obtain faith in Christ" the Lutheran reformers declared in the Augsburg Confession, "God instituted the preaching office to give the Gospel and Sacraments. Through these (the Gospel and Sacraments) the Holy Spirit works faith when and where He pleases in those who hear the Gospel." (Augsburg Confession, Art. V)*