

Daily Prayer

Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage

Wednesday, September 13, 2023

We enter into a time of quiet. We offer to God our selves and in the silence know that God embraces us as God's very own. We offer our hopes and our concerns through our prayers and in the silence listen for God. Today we hold in our prayers the ordinary moments in life—the trials and the joys. We begin by saying

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

Make me to know your ways, O Lord,
and teach me your paths.

The First Reading

Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Philippians 3.7-11

The Psalm

How shall I repay the Lord ♦
for all the benefits he has given to me?

I will lift up the cup of salvation ♦
and call upon the name of the Lord.

I will fulfil my vows to the Lord ♦
in the presence of all his people.

Precious in the sight of the Lord ♦
is the death of his faithful servants.

O Lord, I am your servant, ♦
your servant, the child of your handmaid;
you have freed me from my bonds.

I will offer to you a sacrifice of thanksgiving ♦
and call upon the name of the Lord.

I will fulfil my vows to the Lord ♦
in the presence of all his people,

In the courts of the house of the Lord, ♦
in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.
Alleluia.

Psalm 116.10-17

The Gospel Reading

'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know

me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

John 10.11-16

In silence, we ask what the readings have to say to us today. Is there something that draws us more deeply into the reading? What does God have to say to us? What do we have to ask God?

When the time is right, we conclude our time of silence with the canticle

The Canticle ~ A Song of Deliverance

All the earth, shout and sing for joy,
for great in your midst is the Holy One.

'Behold, God is my salvation; ♦
I will trust and will not be afraid;

'For the Lord God is my strength and my song, ♦
and has become my salvation.'

With joy you will draw water ♦
from the wells of salvation.

On that day you will say, ♦
'Give thanks to the Lord, call upon his name;

'Make known his deeds among the nations, ♦
proclaim that his name is exalted.

'Sing God's praises, who has triumphed gloriously; ♦
let this be known in all the world.

'Shout and sing for joy, you that dwell in Zion, ♦
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.'

Isaiah 12.2-6

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

All the earth, shout and sing for joy,
for great in your midst is the Holy One.

*We continue in prayer for those people and situations that we hold up before God and
continue with the concluding collect, the Lord's prayer and the closing sentences.*

The Intercessions

In peace, let us pray to Jesus our Lord,
who ever lives to make intercession for us.

Saviour of the world,
be present in all places of suffering, violence and pain,
and bring hope even in the darkest night.
Inspire us to continue your work of reconciliation today.
In peace we pray.

Lord of the Church,
empower by your Spirit the work of your Church in every land.
Give us grace to proclaim the gospel joyfully in word and deed.
In peace we pray.

Shepherd and Guardian of our souls,
guide and enable all who lead and serve this community
and those on whom we depend for our daily needs.
Grant that we may seek the peace and welfare of this place.
In peace we pray.

Great Physician,
stretch out your hand to bring comfort, wholeness and peace
to all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit.

Fill us with compassion, that we may be channels of your healing love.

In peace we pray.

Conqueror of death,
remember for good those whom we love but see no longer.
Help us to live this day in the sure and certain hope of your eternal victory.

In peace we pray.

Let us commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,
to the mercy and protection of God. Amen

Our prayers conclude

Almighty God,
your love strengthened holy Cyprian
to guard the purity of your Church
and to let his own life be struck down
by the sword of persecution.
Teach our hearts the discipline of your Spirit,
that we may conform ourselves
to the image of the Crucified
and show forth in our lives
the power of his glorious resurrection;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

[let us pray as our Saviour taught us,]

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial,

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours,

now and for ever. Amen

We conclude

May God grant to the world justice, truth and peace.

Amen.

Cyprian

Bishop of Carthage, Martyr, 258—Memorial

Cyprian was one of the great heroes of the third-century Church, because he guided the Christians in the North African city of Carthage through a period of frightening persecution, until he himself was martyred in the year 258.

He was a wealthy fifty-year-old barrister when he converted to Christianity, and he probably viewed his baptism as his retirement from public service. But the Christians at Carthage decided to exploit his social position and political prestige, and they elected him as their bishop in the year 248.

The next decade proved to be very difficult for the Church in North Africa. The pagan government renewed its persecution of the Church and, on the advice of his presbyters, Cyprian went into hiding for two years. When he returned to Carthage, he had to deal with a large number of people who had lapsed from the faith during the persecution but, once it was past, wanted to come back to the Church. Cyprian refused to slam the door of God's mercy and the Church's forgiveness on them, because he understood the weakness of human will and, even more, the infinite compassion of God in Christ. But, by the same token, he was sure that the returning apostates had wounded Christ anew when they took part in pagan sacrifices. So, he opened the arms of the Church to returning apostates, but required them to undergo public penance in order that they might learn something of what it cost to love and be loved by Christ.

Cyprian himself was called to fulfill this love when, early in the year 258, the imperial government began a new round of persecution. He was banished from Carthage, but insisted on returning and surrendering himself. After a brief trial at which he bore unyielding witness to Christ, he was taken outside the city gates and beheaded.

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