

Daily Prayer

James of Jerusalem

Wednesday, October 23, 2024

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 Lord, open our lips.

And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Make me to know your ways, O Lord,

and teach me your paths.

The First Reading

The whole assembly kept silence, and listened to Barnabas and Paul as they told of all the signs and wonders that God had done through them among the Gentiles. After they finished speaking, James replied, 'My brothers, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first looked favourably on the Gentiles, to take from among them a people for his name. This agrees with the words of the prophets, as it is written,

"After this I will return,

and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen;

from its ruins I will rebuild it,

and I will set it up,

so that all other peoples may seek the Lord—

even all the Gentiles over whom my name has been called.

Thus says the Lord, who has been making these things known from long ago."

Therefore I have reached the decision that we should not trouble

those Gentiles who are turning to God, but we should write to them to abstain only from things polluted by idols and from fornication and from whatever has been strangled and from blood. For in every city, for generations past, Moses has had those who proclaim him, for he has been read aloud every sabbath in the synagogues.'

Then the apostles and the elders, with the consent of the whole church, decided to choose men from among their members and to send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leaders among the brothers,

Acts 15.12-22a

The Psalm

Blessed are they who have not walked
in the counsel of the wicked, ♦
nor lingered in the way of sinners,
nor sat in the assembly of the scornful.

Their delight is in the law of the Lord ♦
and they meditate on his law day and night.

Like a tree planted by streams of water
bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that do not wither, ♦
whatever they do, it shall prosper.

As for the wicked, it is not so with them; ♦
they are like chaff which the wind blows away.

Therefore the wicked shall not be able to stand in the
judgement, ♦
nor the sinner in the congregation of the righteous.

For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, ♦
but the way of the wicked shall perish.

Psalm 1

The Gospel Reading

When Jesus had finished these parables, he left that place.

He came to his home town and began to teach the people in their synagogue, so that they were astounded and said, 'Where did this man get this wisdom and these deeds of power? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all this?' And they took offence at him. But Jesus said to them, 'Prophets are not without honour except in their own country and in their own house.' And he did not do many deeds of power there, because of their unbelief.

Matthew 13.53-58

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 the Word of the Lord

Return to the Lord, who will have mercy,
to our God, who will richly pardon.

Seek the Lord while he may be found, ♦
call upon him while he is near;

Let the wicked abandon their ways, ♦
and the unrighteous their thoughts;

Return to the Lord, who will have mercy; ♦
to our God, who will richly pardon.

'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, ♦
neither are your ways my ways,' says the Lord.

'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, ♦
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.
'As the rain and the snow come down from above, ♦
and return not again but water the earth,
'Bringing forth life and giving growth, ♦
seed for sowing and bread to eat,
'So is my word that goes forth from my mouth; ♦
it will not return to me fruitless,
'But it will accomplish that which I purpose, ♦
and succeed in the task I gave it.'

Isaiah 55.6-11

*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.*

Return to the Lord, who will have mercy,
to our God, who will richly pardon.

*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

We pray for the flourishing of God's gifts to his Church, saying:
Lord of the Church,
in your mercy hear us.

God our Father, you give us gifts that we may work together
in the service of your Son:
bless the leaders of your Church,
that they may be firm in faith,

and humble before you.

Lord of the Church,
in your mercy hear us.

Bless those who teach,
that they may increase our understanding,
and be open to your word for them.

Lord of the Church,
in your mercy hear us.

Bless those who minister healing,
that they may bring wholeness to others,
yet know your healing in themselves.

Lord of the Church,
in your mercy hear us.

Bless those through whom you speak,
that they may proclaim your word in power,
yet open their ears to your gentle whisper.

Lord of the Church,
in your mercy hear us.

Bless those who work in your world today,
that in the complexity of their daily lives
they may live for you, fulfil your purposes,
and seek your kingdom first.

Lord of the Church,
in your mercy hear us.

Bless those who are uncertain of their gifts
and those who are powerless in this world's eyes,
that they may be made strong in your gift of the Holy Spirit.

Lord of the Church,
hear our prayer,
and make us one in heart and mind
to serve you with joy for ever. Amen.

Our prayers conclude

Let your people, O God,
continually cherish the memory of James,
who was a pillar in your Church
supporting its witness to the resurrection;
and grant that,
following his example in the work of reconciliation,
we may bring all who are at variance and enmity
to peace and perfect unity in your Son;
who lives 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, peace and truth.

Amen.

James of Jerusalem—23 October

Memorial

Today we remember James, who was a brother of Jesus, a witness to his resurrection, and a leader of the Church in Jerusalem. He is not mentioned in any of the gospels, which suggests that he did not follow his brother or take part in his journey to the cross. But when Saint Paul wrote his First Letter to the Corinthians, he made this note: after the resurrection Jesus “appeared to [Peter], then to the Twelve; then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time ...; *then he appeared to James*, then to all the apostles.” The risen Lord chose his own brother to be one of the original witnesses to his resurrection; and this fact, together with his kinship to Jesus, gave James special authority among the other disciples. He came to be recognized as the equal of Peter and John in the leadership of the Church.

James and many other disciples of his brother still considered themselves Jews, still worshipped in the Temple, and still tried to obey the law of Moses. As a result they were suspicious of Saint Paul and his mission to the gentiles. They believed that the gospel was only for Jews, and that pagans first had to be circumcised according to Jewish law before they could be baptized and considered disciples of Christ. Paul taught just the opposite — that pagans had free access to Christ through faith and baptism. The controversy threatened to divide the whole Church, so Paul went up to Jerusalem and argued his case with James and the other “pillars” of the Jerusalem church. In the end James accepted Paul’s arguments and acknowledged that his mission to the non-Jewish nations was indeed the work of God. As Paul wrote: “James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.” Thus, James is honoured for his reconciling wisdom, as one who overcame his own prejudices in order to preserve the unity of the fledgling Church.

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