

Celebrate

Sunday, June 25, 2023
4th Sunday after Pentecost

God does not promise that the path of the disciple will be easy. Jeremiah feels the pain of rejection from those who do not want to hear what he has to say. Jesus declares that his words may bring stark division. Even so, we need not be afraid for God accounts for each hair on our heads. Though we may experience rejection, frustration, division, and death, God's grace and love make us a new creation each day. Marked with the cross and filled with holy food, we are sent from worship to witness to Christ in the world.

Prayer of the Day

Teach us, good Lord God, to serve you as you deserve, to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not to ask for reward, except that of knowing that we do your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

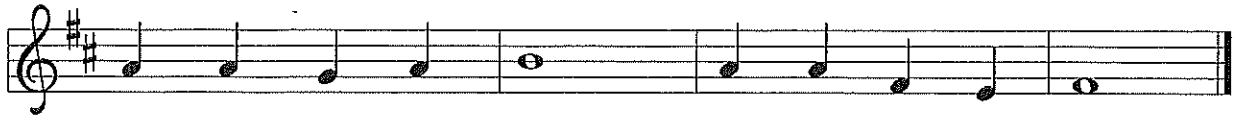
First Reading

Jeremiah 20:7-13

Jeremiah accuses God of forcing him into a ministry that only brings him contempt and persecution. Yet Jeremiah is confident that God will be a strong protector against his enemies and commits his life into God's hands.

O LORD, you have enticed me,
and I was enticed;
you have overpowered me,
and you have prevailed.
I have become a laughingstock all
day long;
everyone mocks me.
⁸For whenever I speak, I must cry out,
I must shout, "Violence and
destruction!"
For the word of the LORD has become
for me
a reproach and derision all day long.
⁹If I say, "I will not mention him,
or speak any more in his name,"
then within me there is something
like a burning fire
shut up in my bones;
I am weary with holding it in,
and I cannot.
¹⁰For I hear many whispering:
"Terror is all around!
Denounce him! Let us denounce him!"
All my close friends
are watching for me to stumble.

"Perhaps he can be enticed,
and we can prevail against him,
and take our revenge on him."
¹¹But the LORD is with me like a
dread warrior;
therefore my persecutors will
stumble,
and they will not prevail.
They will be greatly shamed,
for they will not succeed.
Their eternal dishonor
will never be forgotten.
¹²O LORD of hosts, you test the
righteous,
you see the heart and the mind;
let me see your retribution upon them,
for to you I have committed
my cause.
¹³Sing to the LORD;
praise the LORD!
For he has delivered the life of
the needy
from the hands of evildoers.



An - swer me, O LORD, for your love is kind.

Surely, for your sake I have suf-¹fered reproach,
and shame has cov-¹ered my face.

**⁸I have become a stranger to ¹my own kindred,
an alien to my ¹mother's children.**

⁹Zeal for your house has eat-¹en me up;
the scorn of those who scorn you has fall-¹en upon me.

**¹⁰I humbled my-¹self with fasting,
but that was turned to ¹my reproach. R**

[¹¹I put on ¹sackcloth also,
and became a by-¹word among them.

**¹²Those who sit at the gate mur-¹mur against me,
and the drunkards make ¹songs about me.**

¹³But as for me, this is my prayer to you, at the time you have ¹set, O LORD:
“In your great mercy, O God, answer me with your un-¹failing help.

**¹⁴Save me from the mire; do not ¹let me sink;
let me be rescued from those who hate me
and out of ¹the deep waters. R**

¹⁵Let not the torrent of waters wash over me,
neither let the deep swal-¹low me up;
do not let the pit shut its ¹mouth upon me.]

**¹⁶Answer me, O LORD, for your ¹love is kind;
in your great compassion, ¹turn to me.**

¹⁷Hide not your face ¹from your servant;
be swift and answer me, for I am ¹in distress.

**¹⁸Draw near to me ¹and redeem me;
because of my enemies de-¹liver me. R**

In baptism we were incorporated into the reality of Christ's death and resurrection. We have been made new in Christ through his death and resurrection to live freed from sin.

Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? ²By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? ³Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like

his. ⁶We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷For whoever has died is freed from sin. ⁸But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Gospel

Matthew 10:24-39

Jesus warns his disciples that their ministry in his name will meet with opposition. However, he assures them that they need not fear for the truth will come to light. Life is found in Christ.

[Jesus said to the twelve:] "A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; ²⁵it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

²⁶"So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. ²⁷What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. ²⁸Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰And even the hairs of your head are all counted. ³¹So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

³²"Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; ³³but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

³⁴"Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

³⁵For I have come to set a man against his father,
and a daughter against her mother,
and a daughter-in-law against her
mother-in-law;

³⁶and one's foes will be members of
one's own household.

³⁷Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it."

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Trusting in God's abundant mercy, let us offer our prayers for a world in need.

A brief silence.

You entice your church to speak truth that challenges false notions of peace. Prevail upon us with the good news of Christ's death and resurrection, that we are compelled to share the gospel with all the world. God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Under your watch not even a sparrow goes unnoticed. Safeguard plant and animal habitats threatened by melting glaciers, rising oceans, and receding coastlines. Amplify the voices of those calling for responsible stewardship of the earth's resources. God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Our world is enduring violence and destruction. Rescue your people in nations experiencing conflict or crisis (*especially*). Thwart the efforts of those who sow chaos and terror, and guide those working to bring about peace and reconciliation. God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

You have counted even the hairs of our heads. Reassure anyone experiencing poverty, homelessness, unemployment, or exploitation that every life has value. Look favorably upon all who struggle (*especially*). Answer us, for your steadfast love is good. God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Even when we experience rejection your love invites us to new life. Lift up anyone who feels shunned or excluded on account of their gender, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, or any other human distinction. Make your people one. God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

All who have died with Christ also live with him. We give thanks for (*Philipp Melancthon and*) all the saints whose faithful confession inspired our own discipleship, and raise us, with them, to eternal life. God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Receive our prayers and answer us, O God, in the name of Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 6. **Tuesday** (commemoration of Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, died 444) Revelation 2:8-11. **Wednesday** (commemoration of Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, died around 202) Matthew 10:5-23. **Thursday** (Peter and Paul, Apostles) John 21:15-19. **Friday** Galatians 5:7-12. **Saturday** (commemoration of Catherine Winkworth, died 1878; John Mason Neale, died 1866; hymn translators) Jeremiah 28:1-4. **Fifth Sunday after Pentecost** Jeremiah 28:5-9; Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18; Romans 6:12-23; Matthew 10:40-42.

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