

MIDWEEK OF LENT 1

RETURN TO PRAYER

AS WE GATHER

The season of Lent is a time for self-examination and repentance, and it is a time for prayer. “Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire . . . the Christian’s vital breath,” penned hymnwriter James Montgomery (*TLH* 454:1, 5). But sometimes that holy conversation is interrupted or sidelined from a place of priority in our lives. Even our Lord’s closest disciples did not serve Him faithfully as watchers and prayers with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. In this holy season, we return to prayer, treasuring the opportunity to pray without ceasing and leading prayerful lives that reflect the mercy of our heavenly Father, who hears our supplications and responds to them in love.

+ PREPARATION +

PRELUDE

OPENING HYMN: [*Go to Dark Gethsemane*](#)

INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

OPENING SENTENCES

Joel 2:13; Colossians 4:2; Philippians 4:5–6

P Return to the Lord, your God, for He is gracious and merciful,

C **slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and repents of evil.**

P Continue steadfastly in prayer,

C **being watchful in it with thanksgiving.**

P The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything,

C **but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

P Let us make our confession to our God, seeking His grace and forgiveness. Together we speak stanza 1 of the hymn “Lord, to You I Make Confession.”

**Lord, to You I make confession:
I have sinned and gone astray,
I have multiplied transgression,
Chosen for myself my way.**

**Led by You to see my errors,
Lord, I tremble at Your terrors.**

Text: Public domain

- P The almighty and merciful Lord grant you pardon, forgiveness, and remission of all your sins.

SALUTATION and PRAYER OF THE DAY

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray.

O God our Father, who in mercy hears all who call on You, graciously open Your ears to our petitions, and lead us by Your Spirit, that without doubting we may persevere in prayer and believingly await Your promised aid; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C **Amen.**

+ WORD +

FIRST READING

Genesis 32:22–30

P A reading from Genesis, the thirty-second chapter.

²² The same night he arose and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. ²³ He took them and sent them across the stream, and everything else that he had. ²⁴ And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. ²⁵ When the man saw that He did not prevail against Jacob, He touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as He wrestled with him. ²⁶ Then He said, "Let Me go, for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me." ²⁷ And He said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." ²⁸ Then He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed." ²⁹ Then Jacob asked Him, "Please tell me Your name." But He said, "Why is it that you ask My name?" And there He blessed him. ³⁰ So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered."

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM

Psalm 121

P I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?

C **My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.**

P He will not let your foot be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber.

C **Behold, He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.**

P The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade on your right hand.

C **The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.**

P The LORD will keep you from all evil; He will keep your life.

C **The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

SECOND READING

Romans 8:22–28

P A reading from Romans, the eighth chapter.

²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

²⁷ And He who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

²⁸ We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 26:36–46

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twenty-sixth chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

³⁶ Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and He said to His disciples, “Sit here, while I go over there and pray.” ³⁷ And taking with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, He began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸ Then He said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with Me.” ³⁹ And going a little farther He fell on His face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” ⁴⁰ And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And He said to Peter, “So, could you not watch with Me one hour? ⁴¹ Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” ⁴² Again, for the second time, He went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, Your will be done.” ⁴³ And again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So, leaving them again, He went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words

again. ⁴⁵ Then He came to the disciples and said to them, “Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Rise, let us be going; see, My betrayer is at hand.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

SERMON HYMN: [*Rise, My Soul, to Watch and Pray*](#)

SERMON

THE LITANY

P O Lord,

C **have mercy.**

P O Christ,

C **have mercy.**

P O Lord,

C **have mercy.**

P O Christ,

C **hear us.**

P God the Father in heaven,

C **have mercy.**

P God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

C **have mercy.**

P God the Holy Spirit,

C **have mercy.**

P Be gracious to us.

C **Spare us, good Lord.**

P Be gracious to us.

C **Help us, good Lord.**

P From all sin, from all error, from all evil;

From the crafts and assaults of the devil; from sudden and evil death;

From pestilence and famine; from war and bloodshed; from sedition and from rebellion;

From lightning and tempest; from all calamity by fire and water; and from everlasting death:

C **Good Lord, deliver us.**

P By the mystery of Your holy incarnation; by Your holy nativity;

By Your Baptism, fasting, and temptation; by Your agony and bloody sweat; by Your cross and passion; by Your precious death and burial;

By Your glorious resurrection and ascension; and by the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter:

C **Help us, good Lord.**

P In all time of our tribulation; in all time of our prosperity; in the hour of death; and in the Day of Judgment:

C **Help us, good Lord.**

P We poor sinners implore You

C **to hear us, O Lord.**

P To rule and govern Your holy Christian Church; to preserve all pastors and ministers of Your Church in the true knowledge and understanding of Your wholesome Word and to sustain them in holy living;

To put an end to all schisms and causes of offense; to bring into the way of truth all who have erred and are deceived;

To beat down Satan under our feet; to send faithful laborers into Your harvest; and to accompany Your Word with Your grace and Spirit:

C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

P To raise those who fall and to strengthen those who stand; and to comfort and help the weakhearted and the distressed:

C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

P To give to all peoples concord and peace; to preserve our land from discord and strife; to give our country Your protection in every time of need;

To direct and defend our [president/queen/king] and all in authority; to bless and protect our magistrates and all our people;

To watch over and help all who are in danger, necessity, and tribulation; to protect and guide all who travel;

To grant all women with child, and all mothers with infant children, increasing happiness in their blessings; to defend all orphans and widows and provide for them;

To strengthen and keep all sick persons and young children; to free those in bondage; and to have mercy on us all:

C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

P To forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers and to turn their hearts; to give and preserve for our use the kindly fruits of the earth; and graciously to hear our prayers:

C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

P Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,

C **we implore You to hear us.**

P Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C **have mercy.**

P Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C **have mercy.**

P Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C **grant us Your peace.**

P O Christ,

C **hear us.**

P O Lord,

C **have mercy.**

P O Christ,

C **have mercy.**
P O Lord,
C **have mercy. Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

C **Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

CLOSING COLLECT

P Let us pray.
C **I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.**

BLESSING

P The blessing of almighty God, the Father, the T Son, and the Holy Spirit be and remain with you always.
C **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN: [*Lord of All Hopefulness*](#)

POSTLUDE

Acknowledgments

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