

Vespers for Thursday after Ash Wednesday

Commemoration of Martin Luther, Pastor and Reformer, 1546

Opening Sentence

I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel; my heart teaches me, night after night. I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not fall. *Psalm 16:7,8*

The Invitatory and Psalter

V: O God, make speed to save us.

R: O Lord, make haste to help us.

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

O Gracious Light *Phos hilaron*

O gracious Light,
pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven,
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!

Now as we come to the setting of the sun,
and our eyes behold the vesper light,
we sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices,
O Son of God, O Giver of life,
and to be glorified through all the worlds.

The Psalm or Psalms Appointed

Psalm 124 Nisi quia Dominus

I looked but there was no help; so my own arm brought me victory.

¹ If the LORD had not been on our side, *
let Israel now say;

² If the LORD had not been on our side, *
when enemies rose up against us;

³ Then would they have swallowed us up alive *
in their fierce anger toward us;

⁴ Then would the waters have overwhelmed us *
and the torrent gone over us;

⁵ Then would the raging waters *
have gone right over us.

⁶ Blessed be the LORD! *
he has not given us over to be a prey for their teeth.

⁷ We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowler; *
the snare is broken, and we have escaped.

⁸ Our help is in the Name of the LORD, *
the maker of heaven and earth.

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

I looked but there was no help; so my own arm brought me victory.

Psalm 136 *Confitemini*

Give thanks to the Lord who does great wonders; for his mercy endures for ever.

¹ Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, *
for his mercy endures for ever.

² Give thanks to the God of gods, *
for his mercy endures for ever.

³ Give thanks to the Lord of lords, *
for his mercy endures for ever.

⁴ Who only does great wonders, *
for his mercy endures for ever;

⁵ Who by wisdom made the heavens, *
for his mercy endures for ever;

⁶ Who spread out the earth upon the waters, *
for his mercy endures for ever;

⁷ Who created great lights, *
for his mercy endures for ever;

⁸ The sun to rule the day, *
for his mercy endures for ever;

⁹ The moon and the stars to govern the night, *
for his mercy endures for ever.

¹⁰ Who struck down the firstborn of Egypt, *
for his mercy endures for ever;

¹¹ And brought out Israel from among them, *
for his mercy endures for ever;

¹² With a mighty hand and a stretched-out arm, *
for his mercy endures for ever;

¹³ Who divided the Red Sea in two, *
for his mercy endures for ever;

¹⁴ And made Israel to pass through the midst of it, *
for his mercy endures for ever;

¹⁵ But swept Pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea, *
for his mercy endures for ever;

¹⁶ Who led his people through the wilderness, *
for his mercy endures for ever.

¹⁷ Who struck down great kings, *
for his mercy endures for ever;

¹⁸ And slew mighty kings, *
for his mercy endures for ever;

¹⁹ Sihon, king of the Amorites, *
for his mercy endures for ever;

²⁰ And Og, the king of Bashan, *
for his mercy endures for ever;

²¹ And gave away their lands for an inheritance, *
for his mercy endures for ever;

²² An inheritance for Israel his servant, *
for his mercy endures for ever.

²³ Who remembered us in our low estate, *
for his mercy endures for ever;

²⁴ And delivered us from our enemies, *
for his mercy endures for ever;

²⁵ Who gives food to all creatures, *
for his mercy endures for ever.

²⁶ Give thanks to the God of heaven, *
for his mercy endures for ever.

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

Give thanks to the Lord who does great wonders; for his mercy endures for ever.

Psalm 31 *In te, Domine, speravi*

Into your hands I commend my spirit, for you have redeemed me.

¹ In you, O LORD, have I taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; *
deliver me in your righteousness.

² Incline your ear to me; *
make haste to deliver me.

³ Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe, for you are my crag and my stronghold; *
for the sake of your Name, lead me and guide me.

⁴ Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me, *
for you are my tower of strength.

⁵ Into your hands I commend my spirit, *
for you have redeemed me, O LORD, O God of truth.

⁶ I hate those who cling to worthless idols, *
and I put my trust in the LORD.

⁷ I will rejoice and be glad because of your mercy; *
for you have seen my affliction; you know my distress.

⁸ You have not shut me up in the power of the enemy; *
you have set my feet in an open place.

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

Into your hands I commend my spirit, for you have redeemed me.

The Lessons

A reading from John 1:29-34 (NRSV)

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel." And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend

and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God."

Here ends the Reading.

God is always looking at you from heaven, that your actions are everywhere visible to the divine eyes and are constantly being reported to God by the Angels.

The Song of Mary *Magnificat*

Luke 1:46-55

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; *
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed: *
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.
He has mercy on those who fear him *
in every generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm, *
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, *
and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things, *
and the rich he has sent away empty.
He has come to the help of his servant Israel, *
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
The promise he made to our fathers, *
to Abraham and his children for ever.

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

God is always looking at you from heaven, that your actions are everywhere visible to the divine eyes and are constantly being reported to God by the Angels.

The Prayers

V: The Lord be with you.

R: *And also with you.*

Let us pray.

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.

Suffrages B

That this evening may be holy, good, and peaceful,
We entreat you, O Lord.

That your holy angels may lead us in paths of peace and goodwill,
We entreat you, O Lord.

That we may be pardoned and forgiven for our sins and offenses,
We entreat you, O Lord.

That there may be peace to your Church and to the whole world,
We entreat you, O Lord.

That we may depart this life in your faith and fear,
and not be condemned before the great judgment seat of Christ,
We entreat you, O Lord.

That we may be bound together by your Holy Spirit in
the communion of [the glorious and ever-blessed Virgin Mary,
St. Michael the Defender, _____ and] all your saints,
entrusting one another and all our life to Christ,
We entreat you, O Lord.

Collect of the Day

Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings with your most gracious favor, and further us with your continual help; that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in you, we may glorify your holy Name, and finally, by your mercy, obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

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O teacher most excellent, * O light of holy Church, lover of the divine law, intercede for us unto the Son of God V. With my lips, I have been telling of all the judgements of your mouth.

R. I have had more delight in the way of your testimonies than in all manner of riches.

O God, our refuge and our strength, who raised up your servant Martin Luther to reform and renew your church in the light of your word: Defend and purify the church in our own day and grant that, through faith, we may boldly proclaim the riches of your grace, which you have made known in Jesus Christ our Savior, who with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

A Prayer of Self-Dedication

Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to you, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly yours, utterly dedicated unto you; and then use us, we pray you, as you will, and always to your glory and the welfare of your people; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer for Mission

O God and Father of all, whom the whole heavens adore: Let the whole earth also worship you, all nations obey you, all tongues confess and bless you, and men and women everywhere love you and serve you in peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[\[Include authorized intercessions or thanksgivings-opens new window\]](#)

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. *Amen. Ephesians 3:20*

The Angelus

The Angel of the Lord announced to Mary
And she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Behold the handmaid of the Lord
Be it unto me according to your word

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus

*Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*

And the Word was made flesh.
And dwelled among us.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

V: Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R: *That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.*

Let us pray:

Pour your grace into our hearts, O Lord, that we who have known the incarnation of your Son Jesus Christ, announced by an angel to the Virgin Mary, may by his cross and passion be brought to the glory of his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*