

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

We give You heartfelt thanks, O Lord, for sending Your Son Jesus Christ, into the world. Being perfect, He humbled Himself in the form of our sinful flesh and has become the Source of our salvation. We acknowledge, O Lord, that we are undeserving of even the least of Your grace and mercy. Our love for the world has often made us reluctant to serve You. We want to be with You, but hesitate to follow You. We have not always honored You with our service. For our lack of zeal and self-sacrifice, forgive us, O Lord.

Open our eyes to Your goodness and to the needs of others. Unstop our ears that we may hear Your voice above the noise and confusion of our times. Free our tongues that we may speak of the wonders of Your mighty acts. Give us vision to see the world ripe for the harvest. May all ears be attentive to the message of Your heavenly Gospel. May all voices be tuned to sing Your praise. Give to the lonely an awareness of Your presence, to the sick, the expectation of healing through Your power, and to the depressed, a goal for living.

Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. **(Time of silent prayer.)**

This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Savior.

© Amen.

EPIPHANY SIX

Chant Tone



Introit

I will praise You with an | upright heart,*
when I learn Your just and righ | teous
decrees.

Blessèd are those whose way is
— blameless,*
who walk in the law | of the Lord!
Blessèd are those who keep His
testi — monies,*
who seek Him with their — whole
heart.

You have commanded Your —precepts*
to be kept dil | igently.
Oh that my ways may be —steadfast*
in keeping Your —statutes!

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

I will praise You with an | upright heart,*
when I learn Your just and righ | teous
decrees.

(Antiphon, Psalm 119:7;
Psalm 119:1-2, 4-5)

Collect of the Day

O Lord, graciously hear the prayers of Your people that we who justly suffer the consequence of our sin may be mercifully delivered by Your goodness to the glory of Your name; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

Gradual

Praise the Lord, all — nations!*

Extol Him, all — peoples!

For great is His Love toward us,*
and the faithfulness of the Lord endures for —ever.

Ascribe to the Lord the glory | due His name,*
bring an offering and come in | to His courts!

(Psalm 117:1-2a; 96:8)

ENTRANCE PRAYER: O righteous and gracious Father, because You sent Your Son in the form of a humble servant, I understand that is what I should be. Create in me the mind of Christ that I may be Your servant. Destroy in me false humility that is really pride, false pride that is really fear, and false expectations that will not face reality. Expose the shabbiness, phoniness, and emptiness of my pretenses and dreams. In Christ accept me as I am and give to me the blessing of His innocence. By His dying and rising again, permit me to rise out of the death of pride to new life in humility. All this I ask that I would be blessed through Him Whom You exalted to be my Lord. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

WE REJOICE BECAUSE WE ARE BLESSED. Jesus presents us with our spiritual reality. When we give the problems and control of our life over to God we will find true peace, we will inherit the universe. When we suffer persecution for the sake of the Gospel, we are simply enduring a small part of what Jesus suffered for our sin and endured to make us members of His Eternal kingdom. And what is a moment of suffering in the kingdom, compared with the eternity of glory yet to come? (Or put another way, what is one moment of suffering compared with an eternity of suffering?)

THEME OF THE DAY:

Blessèd

INTROIT—(Antiphon: Psalm 119:7;) Psalm 119:1-2, 4-5

Psalm 119 was probably written by David. Some think that it was a lifetime work as there are 22 sections (one for each letter of the Hebrew Alphabet.) The purpose of Psalm 119 is to expound on the excellent nature and usefulness of the Law of God. Our Introit comes from the first section the letter, "Aleph." It fits our lessons because of the uses of "blessèd."

COLLECT

Our sin deserves dreadful consequences. We suffer for our sin, yet Jesus, Who was without sin, suffered for us. We are delivered through His suffering to the goodness of glory.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON—Jeremiah 17:5-8

On account of their faithless sinning, the people at the time Jeremiah, were being allowed to suffer the consequences. King Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem and their rulers were sent into exile. The people were expecting that God would save them out of their situation, not because they were faithful, not because they believed, not because they were willing to follow, but because they were "His People." Jeremiah gave them a parable of cursed and blessed, to encourage the people to trust in God and not man.

GRADUAL—Psalm 117:1-2a, 96:8

God showers us with great love (grace) which is given to the believers and the unbelievers every morning. Verse 2 of Psalm 117 expresses the Love of God that shows forth in His faithfulness. By God's grace, we know that He will never vary from any part of His promises.

EPISTLE LESSON—1 Corinthians 15:1-20

For Epiphany 6,7 and 8, we simply cut up 1 Corinthians 15 and read it. These sections stand rather independent of the theme for the day. In the first 11 verses, the Apostle Paul was again emphasizing his authority to proclaim the Gospel. This is necessary because the people to whom he is addressing this chapter have been lead away from the truth by those who claim the Resurrection of Jesus was faked. After Paul reminded them it was he who brought them the truth in the first place. Then Paul launched into his argument; if there is no resurrection from the dead your faith is pointless. Against this foolishness Paul on his credentials, on his truth proclaims that Christ has risen, for the benefit of all.

GOSPEL LESSON—Luke 6:17-26

This section of Luke is very much like Matthew 5 which is called, "The Beatitudes." Beatitude means: supreme blessing. Luke may be relating