

our rage. We demand that we are recognized for our works. Jesus told a parable. It must have been humbling for the leaders of the people to hear Him repeat the Words written in Proverbs, because these people thought they were all wise unto the ways of God, most of them assumed they were noticed by God because of their works. But their works were the sin of pride and rage. God has a better way. If we will give up our self will and humble ourselves under His will, then we will find that He has already "lifted" us to the best seat in the kingdom, seated next to His Son eternally in His presence.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

© O Lord, our God, Your mercies are new every morning. You open Your hand and provide for the needs of all. We praise You for every grace and blessing. Strengthen Your Church in the world. Let Your comforting message of salvation in Christ Jesus be proclaimed to troubled souls everywhere. Use our ministries and offerings to extend Your healing and Your love.

We bring our requests to You for the various structures of our society. Bless our national, state and local governments and grant us civil servants who are worthy of honor and respect. Bless those who practice the healing arts for the well being of our temporal bodies. Waken their hearts that they may never forget that You alone are the author of life. Be with all the doctors, nurses and other health care professionals insuring that they are moral and godly in all their efforts and decisions. Grant prosperity to our businesses and industries. Give employers a sense of fairness toward their workers, and employees a feeling of joy and pride in their workmanship, and help us to always find satisfaction in a work well done. Invigorate the schools of our land. Give success to every effort that helps students read, think, and communicate in ways that will promote an informed and responsible citizenry. Arouse curious minds to discover the wonders of Your created order and give all teachers and students the gift to pursue excellence.

Gracious Father, in this last, we pray for all who must walk along the rocky path of affliction with sickness, suffering, or danger of body or soul. Let their way be filled with the light that shines from a knowledge of You and faith in Your Son and lift them the place of honor in Your presence.

Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. (Time of silent prayer.) These and all the hidden yearning of our souls, along with anything else we should seek from the wonder of Your Love and mercy, grant for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

© Amen.

PROPER SEVENTEEN

Chant Tone



ENTRANCE PRAYER: Lord God, heavenly Father, with thanksgiving and praise we come before You. You have made known Your will in Your commandments. You have bestowed Your blessing on those who live by faith in Christ and seek to keep Your commands. By our own effort we cannot walk blamelessly before You, but through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ we are lifted up to the place of Your Holy majesty. For making it possible to appear blameless before You, we give You humble and hearty thanks. May the hearing of Your Word and the use of Your Sacraments produce in us a living faith with love toward others for a willingness to tell them of Jesus. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

I WAS ASSIGNED TO PREACH THE SERMON IN JANUARY OF 1984, WHILE SERVING MY VICARAGE AT WEST PORTAL IN SAN FRANCISCO. After a lot of research and much thought, I took the text and theme for my sermon to the church secretary, Novella Paulson, to be included in the bulletin. I had chosen to make the theme, "Humility." Novella took one look at the theme and stated rather bluntly, "What would you know about being humble!" All we know we have learned at the feet of Jesus, who truly gave up everything He had in a selfless display of humility giving it all over to us. We will never approach His humility for we will never be God taking on human flesh. We work only to set aside our human desires and allow God to work through us, in true acts of humility for others. In His act of humility we continue to be fed with the wonderful Word of God.

THEME OF THE DAY:

Humble to be Lifted

INTROIT—(Antiphon, Psalm 75:7;) Psalm 75:1-2, 6, 9
The title says this is a Psalm of Asaph (the leader of the Temple choir.) It appears to be associated with the time of David's accession to the throne after Saul. As David was "lifted" by God from the obscurity of a shepherd to the place of king, God lifts us up from the obscurity of sin to the place of reigning with Jesus in the eternal realms.

COLLECT

This prayer written in 2006 sounds more like the historic prayer for today than the 1968 version. We ask to follow Jesus in His humility that by setting aside our self, we will ward off sin and the devil.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON—Proverbs 25:2-10

We only read from the book of Proverbs three times in our latest cycle of readings. Under the inspiration of God, Solomon used the Words that Jesus would speak in the parable of our Gospel Lesson for today. It is better to be "lifted" by the king to a place of presence, then to presume a place of power and authority and be sent down. You have probably noticed that our theme for the day is that of being "lifted" by God.

GRADUAL—Psalm 34:9, 19 alternative

For a time David pretended to be insane. It allowed him to hide out in a foreign king's court while Saul was attempting to kill him. David (figuratively) came to his senses and realized that he was avoiding God's will. So he was "lifted" up and got back to work.

EPISTLE LESSON—Hebrews 13:1-17

As Christians we have been delivered from the ravages of sin, and are "lifted" into the wonder of God's presence. In thankfulness for this place of honor we respond in humility by not expressing our "rights" as an individual, but by showing compassion and humility toward others, especially other believers. Our confidence in all we do is built on the foundation of faith in Jesus. He is the same, Yesterday, today and forever. He is the one who from all time and into eternity makes us into Very Important People, the saved in the kingdom.

GOSPEL LESSON—Luke 14:1-14

The very first sin was the sin of pride, believing that we know better than God what is good for us. The first murder in the Bible was committed because of pride, Cain was not humbled by the rejection of his offering by God. Instead he was enraged and decided to kill what he considered to be his competition for the approval of God; his brother. We are always trying to take the best seat away from God through our pride, or through