

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

Let us come before the triune God in prayer.

A brief silence.

God of all, through the waters of baptism you claim people of all races, ethnicities, and languages as your beloved children. Sustain the baptized and increase their faith, that your gospel may be proclaimed throughout the earth. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of the heavens, your creating Spirit animates the universe. We give you thanks for the moon and stars, for the planets and the Milky Way Galaxy, and for all of the mysteries of the cosmos that remain unknown to us. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of freedom, you have liberated us from sin and death and rescue us from all forms of spiritual, social, and political oppression. Defend us from tyrants in our midst and deliver us from all forms of slavery or corruption. Direct our freedom for works of liberation and wholeness. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 119:81-88. **Tuesday** (commemoration of Jan Hus, martyr, 1415) James 5:7-12. **Wednesday** John 7:1-9. **Thursday** Psalm 85:8-13. **Friday** Colossians 4:2-18. **Saturday** Luke 1:57-80. **7th Sunday after Pentecost** (commemoration of Benedict of Nursia, Abbot of Monte Cassino, c. 540) Amos 7:7-15; Psalm 85:8-13; Ephesians 1:3-14; Mark 6:14-29.

CELEBRATE July 4, 2021 (Lectionary 14)

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Celebrate

Sunday, July 4, 2021
6th Sunday after Pentecost

Jesus does great deeds of power and gives his disciples authority over demons. Yet none of this power is unilateral; it all must be received by faith. Jesus asks his disciples to go out without money or supplies, so that they will be dependent on how others receive them. When we are sent from the assembly to witness and to heal, we are asked to be vulnerable, to be dependent on the reception of others. The Spirit always operates in the “between”: between Jesus and his Abba, between Jesus and us, between you and me, between us and those to whom we are sent.

Prayer of the Day

God of the covenant, in our baptism you call us to proclaim the coming of your kingdom. Give us the courage you gave the apostles, that we may faithfully witness to your love and peace in every circumstance of life, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading

Ezekiel 2:1-5

In 597 BCE, the priest Ezekiel was removed into exile in Babylon. While there, he received a vision of God appearing majestically on a chariot throne. Today's reading recounts God's commissioning of Ezekiel during this vision. The prophet is to speak God's word to a people unwilling to hear.

[A voice] said to me: O mortal, stand up on your feet, and I will speak with you. ²And when he spoke to me, a spirit entered into me and set me on my feet; and I heard him speaking to me. ³He said to me, Mortal, I am sending you to the people of Israel, to a nation of rebels who have rebelled against me; they and their

ancestors have transgressed against me to this very day. ⁴The descendants are impudent and stubborn. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, “Thus says the Lord God.” ⁵Whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house), they shall know that there has been a prophet among them.

Our eyes look to you, O God, un -

til you show us your mer - cy.

To you I lift ¹ up my eyes,
to you enthroned ¹ in the heavens.

²As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters,
and the eyes of a maid to the hand ¹ of her mistress,
so our eyes look to you, O LORD our God,
until you show ¹ us your mercy. **R**

³Have mercy upon us, O ¹ LORD, have mercy,
for we have had more than enough ¹ of contempt,

⁴too much of the scorn of the in- ¹ dolent rich,
and of the derision ¹ of the proud. **R**

Christians do not boast in their own accomplishments. Rather, Christian boasting focuses attention on how the power of Christ is present in our lives, especially in times of weakness and vulnerability. No matter what our circumstances in life, Christ's grace is sufficient for us.

I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows. ³And I know that such a person—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows—⁴was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat. ⁵On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. ⁶But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, ⁷even considering

the exceptional character of the revelations. Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. ⁸Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, ⁹but he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

Gospel

Mark 6:1-13

At home and abroad, Jesus and his disciples encounter resistance as they seek to proclaim God's word and relieve affliction.

[Jesus] came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. ²On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, “Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! ³Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him. ⁴Then Jesus said to them, “Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house.” ⁵And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. ⁶And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Then he went about among the villages teaching. ⁷He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; ⁹but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. ¹⁰He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. ¹¹If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.” ¹²So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. ¹³They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.