



Celebrate

Sunday, July 9, 2023
6th Sunday after Pentecost

The mystery of God's ways is sometimes hidden from the wise and intelligent. Jesus associates with those often excluded from the religious community. Like Paul, we struggle with our own selfish desires and seek God's mercy and forgiveness. We gather to be refreshed by Christ's invitation: "Come to me, all you that are weary." Gathered around word, water, and meal, we find rest for our souls.

Prayer of the Day

You are great, O God, and greatly to be praised. You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you. Grant that we may believe in you, call upon you, know you, and serve you, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading

Zechariah 9:9-12

The coming messianic king will inaugurate an era of disarmament and prosperity. Because of God's covenant with Israel, the people are designated as "prisoners of hope."

Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter
Jerusalem!

Lo, your king comes to you;
triumphant and victorious is he,
humble and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

¹⁰He will cut off the chariot from
Ephraim
and the war-horse from Jerusalem;
and the battle bow shall be cut off,
and he shall command peace to
the nations;

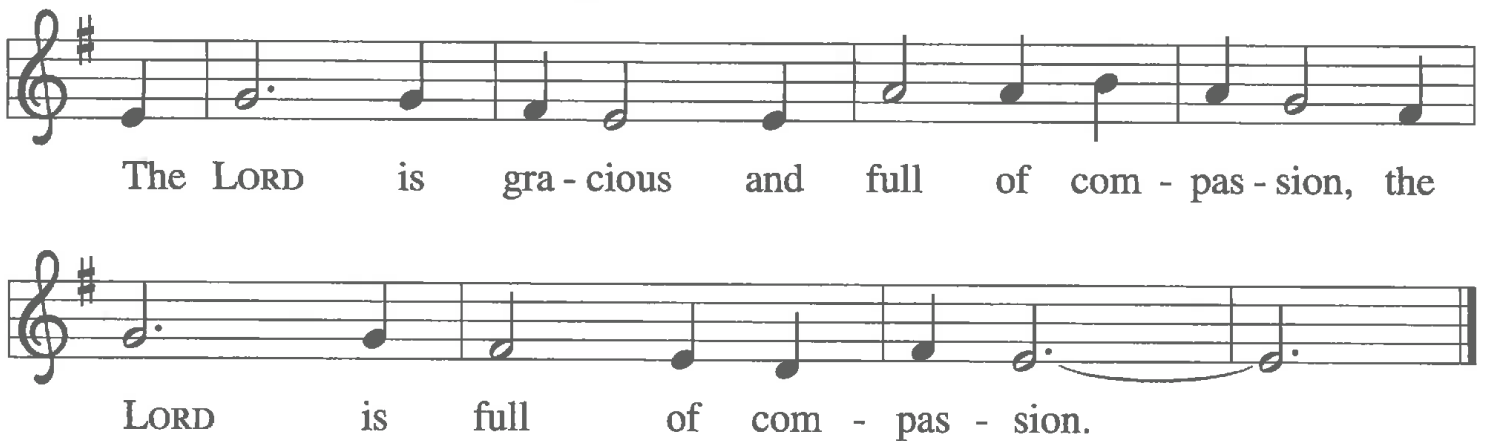
his dominion shall be from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of
the earth.

¹¹As for you also, because of the blood
of my covenant with you,
I will set your prisoners free from
the waterless pit.

¹²Return to your stronghold,
O prisoners of hope;
today I declare that I will restore to
you double.

Psalm

Psalm 145:8-14; refrain, Ps. 145:8



The LORD is gracious and full ¹ of compassion,
slow to anger and abounding in ¹ steadfast love.

⁹**LORD, you are ¹ good to all,
and your compassion is over ¹ all your works. R**

¹⁰All your works shall praise ¹ you, O LORD,
and your faithful ¹ ones shall bless you.

¹¹**They shall tell of the glory ¹ of your kingdom
and speak ¹ of your power,**

¹²that all people may know ¹ of your power
and the glorious splendor ¹ of your kingdom.

¹³**Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom;
your dominion endures through- ¹ out all ages.**

**You, LORD, are faithful in all your words,
and loving in ¹ all your works.**

¹⁴The LORD upholds all ¹ those who fall
and lifts up those who ¹ are bowed down. R

Second Reading

Romans 7:15-25a

Life captive to sin is a catch-22 existence in which we know good but do not do it and do things we know to be wrong. Through Jesus Christ, God has set us free from such a futile existence.

I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. ¹⁸For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. ¹⁹For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. ²⁰Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer

I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.

²¹So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. ²²For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, ²³but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. ²⁴Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? ^{25a}Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Gospel

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Jesus chides people who find fault with both his ministry and that of John the Baptist. He thanks God that wisdom and intelligence are not needed to receive what God has to offer.

[Jesus spoke to the crowd saying:] "To what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another,

¹⁷'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.'

¹⁸For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon'; ¹⁹the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."

²⁵At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and

earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; ²⁶yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. ²⁷All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

²⁸"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Prayers of Intercession

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

Confident that God receives our joys and concerns, let us offer our prayers for the church, those in need, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

God of the covenant, you call ministers to proclaim your gospel of grace throughout the world. Inspire pastors, deacons, church musicians, and all ministers of your word (*especially name/s*) as they carry out your work. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

God of all creation, you reveal your goodness through all you have made: rivers and seas, plants and animals, and endangered species. Prosper the work of conservation organizations, botanical gardens, zoos, and wildlife sanctuaries. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

God of the nations, you desire that all the peoples of the world live in peace. Guide government leaders at all levels—national, state/province, and local—to work for justice, mercy, and reconciliation. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

God of compassion, you bring healing to those who are sick, consolation to those who are grieving, and well-being to those who are distraught. Send skilled caregivers to all in need (*especially*), and make your presence known among all who suffer. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

God of rejoicing, you have brought us together this day to worship around word and sacrament. Encourage children in their learning and growing, and watch over those who are absent today. Lead us all to places of renewal and refreshment. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of all faithfulness, through the witness of the faithful departed you reveal love in action. Embolden us by their example to build up the beloved community in all the contexts we encounter. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, in the name of the one who reconciled all creation to himself, Jesus Christ our Savior.
Amen.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 131. **Tuesday** (commemoration of Benedict of Nursia, Abbot of Monte Cassino, died around 540) Jeremiah 28:10-17. **Wednesday** (commemoration of Nathan Söderblom, Bishop of Uppsala, died 1931) Jeremiah 13:1-11. **Thursday** Psalm 65:[1-8] 9-13. **Friday** Romans 15:14-21. **Saturday** Isaiah 52:1-6. **Sixth Sunday after Pentecost** Isaiah 55:10-13; Psalm 65:[1-8] 9-13; Romans 8:1-11; Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23.

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