

# Season of EASTER



## Prayers

### Collect of the Day

O King of glory, Lord of hosts, uplifted in triumph far above all heavens, leave us not without consolation but send us the Spirit of truth whom You promised from the Father; for You live and reign with Him and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

### Scripture Readings

Psalm 68:1-10 (antiphon v. 32)

Acts 1:12-26

1 Peter 4:12-19; 5:6-11

John 17:1-11

### Hymns

Hymn of the Day – 539 or 553

Other Hymns – 493 (FR), 525 (G), 525 (G), 587 (G), 564, 701

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Lord God, Ruler of all, protect and defend Your Church from every attack of the devil who prowls and seeks to devour. Where he tempts, strengthen Your people to resist his seductions and terrors; where he gains a foothold with false teaching or ungodly living, call to repentance and holiness; and where he incites enemies against Your Word and Church, preserve Your saints in the faith, that they may rejoice to share in the sufferings of Christ. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, bless the work of our missionaries. Bring forth Your harvest from the seeds they sow. Support those who endure fiery trials for Your name. As they shine the light of the Gospel into hostile darkness, guard them with the sign of Your cross. Let them rejoice that in tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril or sword, they share in Your very sufferings. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, You hold the might of man in Your hand and can destroy all things by Your mighty power. Bless our nation and all the peoples of the world. Where war and violence threaten, bring peace and justice. Where oppression reigns, bring liberty. Watch over those who defend us, especially the men and women of our armed forces and those who protect within our communities. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, You have saved us by Your grace. We pray for the sick, the distressed, those whose hearts are heavy, those whose lives are burdened, those who mourn and all who are in any need [*especially \_\_\_\_\_*]. Grant them healing according to Your will, strength and mercy according to their needs, and the peace that passes understanding. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

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Lord, Your Son is both host and meal in the Sacrament of the Altar. Give us faith to recognize His body and blood and to receive with grateful faith this blessed food in Holy Communion. Guide us to live faithfully here on earth until we live forever with You. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, as the first Christians devoted themselves to prayer and worship following Christ's glorious ascension, preserve us in the same until we are raised with all the saints to Your heavenly kingdom; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**



# EASTER SERMON

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER  
(Series A)

**Sermon Text: John 17:1-11**

*“Kept in His Name”*

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Shortly before Jesus was betrayed, arrested, and crucified, He prayed what has become known as “The High Priestly Prayer.” Knowing that He was going to the cross and would be separated from His disciples, Jesus prayed that they be united by faith in Him. He prayed, “Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one” (John 17:11).

God the Father answered Jesus’ prayer by sending the Holy Spirit to call His disciples by the Gospel, to gather and enlighten them with His gifts, and sanctify and keep them united in the one true faith. The Holy Spirit continues this work in the Church today. He continues to unite us, God’s people, through His Word of truth.

In Christ we are united, we are one, and we always will be. In his letter to the Romans, St. Paul proclaims, “For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39).

The unity we have with God and each other is not through our own effort, but is something that Christ has accomplished for us, and it is something we receive through the faith God supplies. Our unity, our being one, isn’t just some abstract idea that makes us feel nice and connected. It is founded on the person of Christ Jesus, true God and true man, and is tethered in what He accomplished in history through His life, death, and resurrection.

There was unity between the Creator and those He created in His image. But, this union was destroyed and separation began when Adam and Eve were no longer satisfied with their relationship with God. The crafty serpent convinced our first parents that the gift of life they received and the abundant blessings of the earth were not enough. He attacked God’s Word, what makes us one, when he asked, “Did God actually say...?” Adam and Eve took a big bite

out of the deception that God was holding out on them. They were no longer content with being made in the image of God; they wanted to become like God knowing good and evil. So they ate.

We see the separation that sin caused first manifest itself when Adam and Eve hid from God in their shame. Then we see division introduced between Adam and Eve when he blamed her for his sin. Cain murdered Abel and soon the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great.

Today we continue to suffer separation from God and divisions with each other, and we see that the wickedness of man is still great. We not only observe this, we cause and contribute to it when we refuse to love God above all and our neighbour as ourselves.

We separate ourselves from God whenever we fear, love, and trust in anything above Him. Ourselves, our family, our work, our hobbies, our stuff. We separate ourselves from God when we misuse His name. When we swear thoughtlessly and in vain. When we use God's name like a magic spell to get what we want or to curse others. When we deceive others by speaking and teaching falsely about God. We separate ourselves from God by neglecting His Word and Sacraments and by disregarding His Word of truth.

We cause and contribute to divisions with each other when we do not honour, serve, and obey our parents and other authorities through whom God nurtures, supports, and protects our life on earth. When we do or say anything that injures or endangers our neighbour, when we murder, when we neglect to assist people in their bodily needs, when we harbour anger or hatred in our hearts against our neighbour. We contribute to the divisions with each other when we do not lead sexually pure lives and honour marriage. When we take our neighbour's money or possessions in a dishonest way instead of helping to improve and protect their possessions and income. When we tell lies about our neighbour, betray, slander, or hurt their reputation. When we are not content with the gifts God has provided and covet what belongs to our neighbour.

Repent of your sin that has caused separation between you and God. Repent of Your sin that has caused divisions with your neighbour.

Repent. But do not despair. Repent and believe the good news (Mark 1:15).

God dealt with our sin and removed all that separates us from Him and each other when Christ Jesus came into this fallen world to be our Saviour. Jesus entered into our presence and shed His blood on the cross to cleanse us from our sins and all unrighteousness.

By Adam's sin we were made sinners unable to be in God's holy presence. By Christ's obedience we all have been made righteous (Romans 5:19) and we will dwell together in the house of the Lord forever.

We are made holy, we are made one, by the most holy things: God's Word and Sacraments. All holiness flows from God, so our holiness is being in His presence where He promises to be. Through these means of grace God gives the Holy Spirit who works faith in those who hear the Gospel. Through faith we receive all that God has done to save us in Christ.

Baptism is not just water, but joined with God's powerful and living Word, it is a gracious water of rebirth and renewing in the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5). Through Baptism, Christ gives to you personally the forgiveness of sins that He won for the whole world: "But you were washed,

you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:11).

In Baptism we are made one with Christ and we become part of His Body, “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...” (1 Corinthians 12:12-13).

So that we more confidently believe this and are strengthened in our faith and in holy living, Christ gave us His true Body and true Blood to eat and drink. Whoever eats this bread and drinks this cup trusting what Christ has promised dwells in Christ and Christ in him and has eternal life. For just as the one cup is filled with the wine of many grapes and one bread made from countless grains, so we who are many are one in Christ.

We don’t get closer to God by our own reason or strength or through spiritual exercises, but by drawing close to Him where He makes Himself available: words, water, bread and wine.

Jesus prayed that we would be one and we would be given eternal life, and the Father answered His prayer. The Father answered Jesus’ prayer by glorifying His Son through His life, death, and resurrection which removes our sin and guilt and shame—all that separates us from God and each other. In Christ we are one with God and each other and we will be forever. Amen.

*All praise to Christ we bring,  
Our Lord who intercedes,  
Our great High Priest enthroned above  
Who knows our needs;  
And to the Father sing  
Our songs of thankful praise,  
Who with the Spirit reigns in love  
For endless days.  
(LSB 564, v.6)*