

Devotion for the 5th Thursday in Lent

Psalm 69:13-18

But as for me, my prayer is to you, O Lord. At an acceptable time, O God, in the abundance of your steadfast love answer me in your saving faithfulness.

Deliver me from sinking in the mire; let me be delivered from my enemies and from the deep waters.

Let not the flood sweep over me, or the deep swallow me up, or the pit close its mouth over me.

Answer me, O Lord, for your steadfast love is good; according to your abundant mercy, turn to me.

Hide not your face from your servant; for I am in distress; make haste to answer me.

Draw near to my soul, redeem me; ransom me because of my enemies.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen

Old Testament Reading: Exodus 4:19-31 *Moses visits the elders of Israel*

New Testament Reading: Mark 15:16-32 *Jesus is mocked and crucified*

Devotion: Journey to the Cross

Lent is a 40 day journey to the cross, upon which Jesus suffered and died to win victory over sin, the devil and death; and secure salvation for all who believe, through the forgiveness of sins. The cross shows us the darkness of sin and the wages of death. The cross as an instrument of judicial death, expresses the full effect of sin in the life of every human soul; and the fullness of judgement spoken by God to Adam and all his offspring when He said, “*you are dust and to the dust you shall return.*”

The cross as an expression of divine justice, shows the price Christ paid so that the condemnation of eternal death would be lifted from our heads. Forgiveness is given as a free gift to be received through faith, but it was earned and purchased at great cost. St. Paul said in 1 Corinthians, “*God made Him who had no sin to be sin, so that in Him we would become the righteousness of God.*” As the hymn writer said, it was on the cross that “*Jesus died to pardon and sanctify me.*” In the cross of Jesus the fullness of God’s grace, mercy and steadfast love is expressed for every human soul and offered for all to receive.

The cross as a symbol of redemption, shows the great love God has for each one of us and for every human soul. On the cross Jesus suffered and died to make atonement for the sin of the world. St. John wrote, “*He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*” Lent is a pilgrimage to the cross of Jesus. Lent is a time in which we call out to each other and to all people in the spirit of Joel, saying, “*Come, let us return to the Lord, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.*”

Hymn: Beneath the Cross of Jesus CCLI #453681

Beneath the cross of Jesus I long to take my stand;

The shadow of a mighty rock within a weary land.

A home within a wilderness. A rest upon the way;

From the burning of the noon-tide heat and burdens of the day.

Upon the cross of Jesus, My eye at times can see

The very dying form of One who suffered there for me.

And from my contrite heart with tears, Two wonders I confess:

The wonder of His glorious love and my unworthiness.

Prayer

Heavenly Father during this season of Lent draw us close to your heart in forgiveness through the cross of Jesus; empower us to call others to the cross that they too may receive the heart of your love in forgiveness through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen

The Lord’s Prayer

The Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

Catechism for Lent: Confession and Absolution

Our churches teach that private Absolution should be retained in the churches, although listing all sins is not necessary for Confession. For according to the Psalm, it is impossible. "Who can discern his errors?" Augsburg Confession XI

Our churches teach that there is forgiveness of sins for those who have fallen after Baptism whenever they are converted. The Church ought to impart Absolution to those who return to repentance (Jeremiah 3:12). Now, strictly speaking, repentance consists of two parts. One part is contrition that is terrors striking the conscience through the knowledge of sin. The other part is faith, which is born of the Gospel (Romans 10:17) or the Absolution and believes that for Christ's sake, sins are forgiven. It comforts the conscience and delivers it from terror. Then good works are bound to follow, which are the fruit of repentance. (Galatians 5:22-23). Augsburg Confession XII 1-6

Benediction

Isaiah 61:11

"For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations."