

# Sunday, July 5, 2020 Lectionary 14, Year A

## Introduction

*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.*

## Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God, whose steadfast love is everlasting, whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation. **Amen.**

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Reconciling God, **we confess that we do not trust your abundance, and we deny your presence in our lives.**

**We place our hope in ourselves and rely on our own efforts.**

**We fail to believe that you provide enough for all.**

**We abuse your good creation for our own benefit.**

**We fear difference and do not welcome others as you have welcomed us.**

**We sin in thought, word, and deed.**

**By your grace, forgive us; through your love, renew us; and in your Spirit, lead us; so that we may live and serve you in newness of life. Amen.**

Beloved of God, by the radical abundance of divine mercy

we have peace with God through ✚ Christ Jesus,  
through whom we have obtained grace upon grace.

Our sins are forgiven. Let us live now in hope. For hope does not disappoint,  
because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

## 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."*

<sup>9</sup>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.

<sup>10</sup>He 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.

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

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

## Psalm: Psalm 145:8-14

<sup>8</sup>The LORD is gracious and full | of compassion,  
slow to anger and abounding in | steadfast love.

<sup>9</sup>**LORD, you are | good to all, and your compassion is over | all your works.**

<sup>10</sup>All your works shall praise | you, O LORD, and your faithful | ones shall bless you.

<sup>11</sup>**They shall tell of the glory | of your kingdom and speak | of your power,**

<sup>12</sup>that all people may know | of your power and the glorious splendor | of your kingdom.

<sup>13</sup>**Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom;  
your dominion endures through- | out all ages.**

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

<sup>14</sup>The Lord upholds all | those who fall and lifts up those who | are bowed down.

## 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.*

<sup>15</sup>I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.

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

<sup>21</sup>So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. <sup>22</sup>For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, <sup>23</sup>but 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.

<sup>24</sup>Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? <sup>25a</sup>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:] <sup>16</sup>“To what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another, <sup>17</sup>“We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.’

<sup>18</sup>For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon’; <sup>19</sup>the 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.”

<sup>25</sup>At 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; <sup>26</sup>yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. <sup>27</sup>All 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.

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

## Prayers of Intercession

Called into unity with one another and the whole creation, let us pray for our shared world.

*A brief silence.*

We pray for the church. Sustain us as we share your word. Embrace us as we struggle to find our common ground. Lift up leaders with powerful and prophetic voices. Free us from stagnant faith. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for the well-being of creation. Protect the air, water, and land from abuse and pollution. Free us from apathy in our care of creation and direct us toward sustainable living. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for the nations (*especially the United States and Canada, celebrating their nationhood*).

Guide leaders in developing just policies and guide difficult conversations. Free us from patriotism that hinders relationship-building. Lead us to expansive love for our neighbor. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for all in need. For all who are tired, feeling despair, sick, or oppressed (*especially*). Take their yoke upon you and ease their burdens. Give your consolation and free us from all that keeps us bound. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for this congregation. Bless pastors, deacons, and congregational leaders. Energize children’s ministry volunteers, church administrators, and those who maintain our building. Shine in this place that we might notice the ways your love transforms our lives. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We give thanks for those who have died in faith (*especially*). Welcome them into your eternal rest and comfort us in our grief until we are joined with them in new life. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## **Blessing**

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.

God, the creator, ✝ Jesus, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the comforter, bless you and keep you in eternal love. **Amen.**

## **Dismissal**

Go in peace. Christ is with you. **Thanks be to God.**

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