

The Word for May 24, 2020

FIRST READING: ACTS 1:6-14

⁶When [the apostles] had come together, they asked [Jesus], "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

⁹When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." ¹²Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. ¹³When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

Word of God. Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

We read portions of Psalm 68 today. I invite you to read it responsively with me if you would like

¹Let God arise, and let God's enemies be scattered;
let those who hate God flee.

²**As smoke is driven away, so you should drive them away;
as the wax melts before the fire,
so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.**

³But let the righteous be glad and rejoice before God;
let them also be merry and joyful.

⁴**Sing to God, sing praises to God's name; exalt the one who rides the clouds;
I AM is that name, rejoice before God!**

⁵In your holy habitation, O God,
you are a father to orphans, defender of widows;

⁶**you give the solitary a home and bring forth prisoners into freedom;
but the rebels shall live in desert places.**

⁷O God, when you went forth before your people,
when you marched through the wilderness,

⁸**the earth quaked, and the skies poured down rain,
at the presence of God, the God of Sinai,
at the presence of God, the God of Israel.**

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⁹You sent a bountiful rain, O God;
you restored your inheritance when it languished.

¹⁰**Your people found their home in it;
in your goodness, O God, you have made provision for the poor.**

³²Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth;
sing praises to the Lord.

³³**You ride in the heavens, O God, in the ancient heavens;
you send forth your voice, your mighty voice.**

³⁴Ascribe power to God,
whose majesty is over Israel; whose strength is in the skies.

³⁵**How wonderful you are in your holy places, O God of Israel,
giving strength and power to your people! Blessed be God!**

SECOND READING: 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

¹²Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.

¹³But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you.

^{5:6}Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. ⁷Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.

⁸Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. ¹⁰And after you have suffered for a little while ...

...the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you.

¹¹To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

Word of God. Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL READING: John 17:1-11

¹After Jesus had spoken these words [to his disciples] he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, ²since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. ⁵So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed. ⁶I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They

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were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; ⁸for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. ¹⁰All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. ¹¹And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one."

The Gospel of the Lord! **Praise to you, O Christ!**

Prayers of Intercession

On this seventh Sunday of Easter, we gather in our homes and yet together as one, praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need. Our response to each petition is, "Your mercy is great." *A brief silence.*

In this time of troubling separation, we pray to you, triune God, for the unity of your churches. Bind us together in the truth of your gospel. Make us witnesses of your mysterious might. As you blessed the early disciples for their unfolding ministry, bless those who lead and serve our local congregation. *A brief silence.*

God of unity, hear us:
Your mercy is great.

Nurture the life of your creation. Support those who explore the mysteries of your universe. We praise you for Nicholas Copernicus, whom we commemorate today, and for all the scientists who have enriched our understanding of creation. Help all online teachers to instruct our children in the ways of nature. *A brief silence.*

God of unity, hear us:
Your mercy is great.

As we prepare for Memorial Day, we pray for peace around the world. Protect all soldiers, and assure them of your never-failing strength. Shield the vulnerable who live in paths of violence. We pray especially for the people of Afghanistan and Syria. *A brief silence.*

God of unity, hear us:
Your mercy is great.

Come to the aid of all who suffer. We pray for those who are laden with grief, overwhelmed by anxiety, or struggling without medical care. Uphold all health-care workers who attend to coronavirus patients. Comfort all families and friends who cannot embrace their loved ones at the time of death. We give into your care all the sick, especially those we name here before you (*especially*). *A brief silence.*

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God of unity, hear us:
Your mercy is great.

Again we pray: give the world a vaccine. *A brief silence.*

God of unity, hear us:
Your mercy is great.

Grant your oneness to humankind, so marked by isolation and division. Bring harmony to families, rival gangs, distraught citizens, racial groupings, and members of our legislatures. Give to each individual a wholeness that is birthed in you. Make us one, as you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are one. *A brief silence.*

God of unity, hear us:
Your mercy is great.

Make us steadfast in the faith, and graciously receive our personal petitions: *A longer time of silence.*

God of unity, hear us:
Your mercy is great.

To know you is to have eternal life. We praise you for the lives of all who have died in the faith and who now live in you (*especially*). At the end, bring us with all your saints into your presence. *A brief silence.*

God of unity, hear us:
Your mercy is great.

With bold confidence in your love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God of our past, our present, and our future, we place all for whom we pray into your circle of love, now and forever.
Amen.