

July 18th, 2010 Eighth Sunday After Pentecost

Introduction to the Day

Perhaps the church, at its best, is "all ears." Almighty God urges the faithful, again and again, to "listen up!"—to heed the word from above. So it was with the Israelites, with Mary and Martha, and the early church at Colossae. So it is today as we join the assembly to hear the word of God, the words of life.

After a moment of silent meditation to prepare ourselves for worship, we will begin the liturgy.

Prayers of the People

Gathered together as God's people in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

A brief silence.

God of all ages, gather your church around the rich mysteries you have set before your people. Grant us understanding of your Word, and be revealed to us in the celebration of your sacraments. Send us forth as witnesses of your great mysteries. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Encourage conservation efforts around the world in order that air, soil, and water might be made clean for the sake of future generations. Bring renewal to all creation and to your people as we use the earth's resources. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Give humility and strength to those who approach governments on behalf of those in need (*especially*). Raise up advocates to speak out for justice in this world, and bless those who strive for peace. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Be present as a merciful and gracious host to all who are in places away from their homes: those in prisons, hospitals, extended-care facilities, or in hospice care. Give them comfort in unfamiliar surroundings. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Go with all those who travel in this vacation season. Lead them to share their gifts of faith and love wherever they go as they receive these gifts from you in the other places and faith communities they visit. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

As we remember the witness of all the saints, keep us steadfast in faith, so that the reconciliation you have offered through the cross of Christ might fully come to all people. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

Lector: Please read the introduction, then the citation (i.e.. "The First Reading is from the.... chapter of ..." - then read the text.)

First Reading - *Amos announces God's judgment upon the people of Israel, who sin by oppressing the poor and engaging in deceitful business practices. Amos uses a Hebrew wordplay: a basket of summer fruit (qayits) symbolizes the end (qets) of Israel. That end will come through a famine of hearing the word of the Lord.*

Amos 8:1–12

This is what the Lord GOD showed me — a basket of summer fruit. He said, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A basket of summer fruit." Then the LORD said to me, "The end has come upon my people Israel;

I will never again pass them by.

The songs of the temple shall become wailings in that day," says the Lord GOD;

"the dead bodies shall be many, cast out in every place. Be silent!"

Hear this, you that trample on the needy, and bring to ruin the poor of the land, saying, "When will the new moon be over so that we may sell grain;

and the sabbath, so that we may offer wheat for sale?

We will make the ephah small and the shekel great, and practice deceit with false balances, buying the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, and selling the sweepings of the wheat."

The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob: Surely I will never forget any of their deeds.

Shall not the land tremble on this account, and everyone mourn who lives in it, and all of it rise like the Nile,

and be tossed about and sink again, like the Nile of Egypt?
On that day, says the Lord GOD,
I will make the sun go down at noon,
and darken the earth in broad daylight.
I will turn your feasts into mourning,
and all your songs into lamentation;
I will bring sackcloth on all loins,
and baldness on every head;
I will make it like the mourning for an only son,
and the end of it like a bitter day.
The time is surely coming, says the Lord GOD,
when I will send a famine on the land;
not a famine of bread, or a thirst for water,
but of hearing the words of the LORD.
They shall wander from sea to sea,
and from north to east;
they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the LORD,
but they shall not find it.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 52

PSALM

Psalm 52

You mighty, why do you boast of wickedness
against the godly all day long?

Continually you plot ruin;

your tongue is like a sharpened razor that commits deceit.

You love evil more than good
and lying more than speaking the truth.

You love all words that devour,

O you deceitful tongue.

Oh, that God would demolish you utterly,
topple you, and snatch you from your dwelling, and root you out of the
land of the living!

The righteous shall see and be awestruck,

and they shall laugh at you, saying,

"This is the one who did not take God for a refuge,
but trusted in great wealth and found strength in destruction."

But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God;

I trust in the steadfast love of God forever and ever.

I will thank you forever for what you have done;
in the presence of the faithful I will long for your name, for it is good.

Second Reading - *Sometimes Paul preaches with great attention to theological concepts. Here, however, Paul offers a mystical teaching, that the great mystery of God is "Christ in you." Because Christ is present in the church, Christians share in his life, suffering, and glory.*

Colossians 1:15–28

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers — all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him — provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, became a servant of this gospel.

I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. I became its servant according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

* **Gospel Reading** - *Jesus uses his visit to two sisters as an occasion to remind disciples that an important aspect of obedience is singleminded devotion to Jesus and his word.*

Luke 10:38–42

Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.