

April 28th, 2013 Fifth Sunday of Easter

Introduction to the Day

Easter initiates a new day. It anticipates a new heaven and a new earth. The risen Lord is making all things new. In the mystery of holy baptism God has made new people of us. Today the Lord Jesus invites us to see everyone in a new light—through the lens of love.

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

Prayers of the People

Rejoicing with all the witnesses of the resurrection, let us pray in confidence for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Inspire your church to embody the love you reveal in grace through acts of kindness, generosity, and care for each other, the community, and the world. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Renew the face of the earth and heal the wrongs we have done to your creation. Keep us from squandering the abundant resources you provide. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Grant visions of justice and peace to leaders of the nations of the world. Put an end to the divisions that cause violence and hatred. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Renew the spirits of those who suffer in mind or body. Grant hope in the midst of despair, companionship to those who are alone, and healing to those who are sick. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Break down the barriers that prohibit us from reaching out in love to all God's children. Move us beyond economic, racial, and class distinctions in our service to those in need. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Reveal your promise of a new heaven and a new earth in times of mourning and death.

Comfort us with the joy of Christ's resurrection and renew in us the hope of everlasting life. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

In resurrection hope we commend to you all for whom we pray, trusting in the promise of new life; through Jesus Christ, our risen 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 – *In defense of his earlier baptism of pagan believers, Peter demonstrates to the members of the Jerusalem church that God's intention to love Gentiles as well as Jews is revealed in Jesus' own testimony. In this way the mission to the Gentiles is officially authorized.*

Acts 11:1–18

Now the apostles and the believers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also accepted the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him, saying, "Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?" Then Peter began to explain it to them, step by step, saying, I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. There was something like a large sheet coming down from heaven, being lowered by its four corners; and it came close to me. As I looked at it closely I saw four-footed animals, beasts of prey, reptiles, and birds of the air. I also heard a voice saying to me, 'Get up, Peter; kill and eat.' But I replied, 'By no means, Lord; for nothing profane or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' But a second time the voice answered from heaven, 'What God has made clean, you must not call profane.' This happened three times; then everything was pulled up again to heaven. At that very moment three men, sent to me from Caesarea, arrived at the house where we were. The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, 'Send to Joppa and bring Simon, who is called Peter; he will give you a message by which you and your entire household will be saved.' And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?" When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, "Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life."

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 148

Hallelujah! Praise the LORD from the heavens;
praise God in the heights.

**Praise the LORD, all you angels;
sing praise, all you hosts of heaven.**

Praise the LORD, sun and moon;
sing praise, all you shining stars.

**Praise the LORD, heaven of heavens,
and you waters above the heavens.**

Let them praise the name of the LORD,
who commanded, and they were created,
**who made them stand fast forever and ever,
giving them a law that shall not pass away.**

Praise the LORD from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps;

**fire and hail, snow and fog,
tempestuous wind, doing God's will;**

mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars;

**wild beasts and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds;**

sovereigns of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the world;

**young men and maidens,
old and young together.**

Let them praise the name of the LORD,
whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over earth and heaven.

**The LORD has raised up strength for the people
and praise for all faithful servants,
the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. Hallelujah!**

SECOND READING – *John's vision shows us that in the resurrection the new age has dawned; God dwells with us already. Yet we wait for the time when the tears that cloud our vision will be wiped away. Then we will see the new heaven, new earth, and new Jerusalem.*

Revelation 21:1–6

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

"See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;

they will be his peoples,

and God himself will be with them;

he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

for the first things have passed away."

And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING – *After washing the disciples' feet, predicting his betrayal, and then revealing his betrayer, Jesus speaks of his glorification on the cross. This deep complicated love of Jesus, even to death on the cross, will be the distinctive mark of Jesus' community.*

John 13:31–35

When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Gospel of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.