

the older brother. There are not two stories but one. Both of the sons have erred. The two sons in a similar way were not happy, or grateful for what their father had given them. Instead of showing gratitude they each grumble in their own way. Neither believes their father has their best interest at heart. The father shows how patient and loving he truly is. His compassion is for the younger son, who was lost and found, and his compassion is on the older son, who seems to have lost all joy in being with his father. In our life we will be both of the sons. Sometimes we run away from God and sometimes we are simply discouraged with God. In either case God is always ready to assist our repentance and to receive us back as a son worthy of living in His kingdom and under His care.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

¶ O God, we praise You for all Your mercies. We thank You that You have redeemed our life from destruction and crowned us with loving kindness. We praise You and that You have not dealt with us as our sins would deserve, nor rewarded us according to what we have done. Out of Your grace and mercy, You gave Your Only-Begotten Son to take on our sin, to suffer for our misdeeds, so that we would be rewarded with everlasting life.

Grant that we who are gathered here for Your worship, may repent of our evil, turn away from all our sinful thoughts and ways, and find Your abundant pardon in the death and Resurrection of Jesus.

Cause Your Gospel to be preached in all lands, and in every language. Maintain Your Church in union with Jesus Christ in the true faith. Bless our schools, that all teachers may both acknowledge and serve You, and that the students will find in You the treasures of life and truth. Give wisdom and counsel to all in the government of this land who have authority over us, so that we may worship and serve You without hindrance, and live in peace and righteousness.

Make us mindful of the needs of all people. As You give both the righteous and the ungodly their daily bread, help us be thankful to receive Your benefits and ungrudgingly use what You have given us to the benefit of others.

To all who suffer sickness, pain, disease, affliction, or any adversity of body, mind or spirit, we ask, O Lord, that You would give them the strength that will enable them to bear their cross and the spirit to be able to say, "Your will be done."

Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. (**Time of silent prayer.**)

God our Father, pour out Your grace on us and give us Your Holy Spirit so that we are obedient and able to keep each of Your Commandments. Help us be at odds with the sinfulness of the world and empower us to give our heart and soul to You alone. This we pray in Jesus name.

© Amen.

LENT FOUR

Chant Tone



Introit

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your | steadfast love;*
according to Your abundant mercy
blot out my trans — gressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my in — iquity,*
and cleanse me | from my sin!
For I know my trans — gressions,*
and my sin is ever be — fore me.
Against You, You only, have I sinned
and done what is evil | in Your sight,*
so that You may be justified in Your
words and blameless in Your
— judgment.

Behold, I was brought forth in in — iquity,*
and in sin did my mother con — ceive
me.

Behold, You delight in truth in the
inward — being,*
and You teach me wisdom in
the | secret heart.

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy — Spirit;
as it was in the be — ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. — Amen.

Have mercy on me, O God, according
to Your | steadfast love;*
according to Your abundant mercy
blot out my trans — gressions.

(Antiphon: Psalm 51:1;
Psalm 51:2-6)

Collect of the Day

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Your mercies are new every morning; and though we deserve only punishment, You receive us as Your children and provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant that we may heartily acknowledge Your merciful goodness, give thanks for all Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

Gradual

[O come, let us fix our eyes on] — Jesus,*
the founder and perfecter | of our faith,
Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despis | ing the shame,*
and is seated at the right hand of the | throne of God.

(Hebrews 12:2)

Verse

The father said to his servants, "This my son was dead, and is a | live again;*
he was lost, | and is found."

(Luke 15:22a, 24a)

ENTRANCE PRAYER: Lord God, heavenly Father, Light of our life, the expectation of our salvation; grant us, we pray, the power of Your Holy Spirit, that we will trust in the merits of Jesus Christ, our Savior, rather than in our own attempted goodness. Help us look up at the cross of Christ and on it find Your Love poured out for us in the death of Your Son. Enable us to lift high the cross of Jesus, that whoever believes in Him would not perish but have eternal life. Help us lead the world out of darkness and into Your marvelous light. In this all we ask You to accept the grateful melodies of our hearts, and listen to our songs of praise. In Jesus name we pray. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON IS OFTEN KNOWN AS THE GOSPEL WITHIN THE GOSPEL. It is so called because it clearly speaks of the work of God our Father over against the people of the world. Humanity rebelled against God, yet when we return, led by God and His overwhelming Love for us, we are received not as terrible sinners who deserve nothing but pain and punishment—or as the prodigal son expected, to be treated as a servant—we are instead received as a son and restored to our place of inheritance. We welcome all who have come out to worship this day. With a deep sense of awe we recognize that God receives our worship as perfect in His sight through the work and the person of His Son.

THEME OF THE DAY:

Rebellion and Repentance

INTROIT—(Antiphon: Psalm 51:1;) Psalm 51:2-6

There is nothing historic about our Propers today. The Introit and the Epistle Lesson are both new in our latest round of readings. The remainder were added in our first three year cycle. The title of Psalm 51 says it all: "To the Choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him after he had gone in to Bathsheba." We use this Psalm to remind ourselves of the volume of our sin and the great distress it has caused in our relationship with God.

COLLECT

One of the main reasons for giving our service to God is because of the abundance of His mercy. He gives us everything we need, and we praise and thank Him for the wonder of His generosity.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON—Isaiah 12:1-6

The chosen people are called a rebellious son. Although God was angry with them, He did not turn away. When the chosen people repented, they always found God waiting for them. God was angry with them for their continual rebellion and unbelief, but it is His anger that will turn away. The result of their repentance was always joy and celebration

GRADUAL—Hebrews 12:2

Historically our Gradual changed every Sunday. In our first revision to the Propers, we decided to only change it with the Festival. We compare the greater wonder of Heaven to our place here on Earth. We can only, "fix our eyes on Jesus" if the Holy Spirit allows our eyes to focus on Him.

EPISTLE LESSON—2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Paul replied to those who opposed his message and created a false gospel. The predicament of humans is that we are in need of reconciliation with God. Our sin has alienated us from Him. It is up to God to be the power of reconciliation. God appeals to sinners to come to Him brought by Christ. He has provided the way by which we become a new creation through the power of the cross. Christ has power over nature. He even has power over our sinful nature. He can return us to the place of creation, He can as His work reconcile us to God.

VERSE—Luke 15:22a, 24a

The verse comes from the Gospel Lesson.

GOSPEL LESSON—Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

There appear to be two stories going on in the parable of the Prodigal Son. First the story of the dissolute younger son, and then the story of