

to be our path to salvation. Peter expressed the thought that we can master our own way into Heaven, we can command Heaven from our own desire and wish. Jesus explained that not only is the life of the Christ demanded by God as sufficient payment for the sins of the world, but to follow in the footsteps of the Christ will mean that we must give up our personal will and desire to take up the will and desire of God. It is possible for a person to, "gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul," by attempting to insert their will in the place of the will of God. We might end up as Jeremiah, an outcast among our own people, but the gift of eternal life is worth any minute of suffering today.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

⑤ O Lord, our God, You are wise and powerful, good and gracious. Your mercies are new every morning. Each day You open Your hand and provide for the needs of Your children on Earth. We praise You for every grace and blessing. Strengthen Your Church in all the world. Let Your comforting message of Salvation in Christ Jesus be proclaimed to troubled souls everywhere. Use the stewardship of our time, talent and offerings to extend Your healing and the wonder of the expectation of eternal life with You.

We bring our requests to You for the various structures of our society. Bless our national, state and local governments and grant us civil servants who are worthy of honor and respect. Bless those who practice the healing arts for the well being of our temporal bodies. Waken their hearts that they may never forget that You alone are the author of life. Be with all the doctors, nurses and other health care professionals that they are moral and godly in all their efforts and decisions. Grant prosperity to our businesses and industries. Give employers a sense of fairness toward their workers, and employees a feeling of joy and pride in their workmanship. Help us to always find satisfaction in a work well done. Invigorate the schools of our land. Give success to every effort that helps students read, think, learn and communicate in ways that will promote an informed and responsible citizenry.

Shed the light of the Gospel on all the nations of our world, that all people everywhere may worship You. Bless the rulers of those nations that in reverence to You, they would protect and defend Your people.

Gracious Father, in this last, we pray for all who must walk along the rocky path of affliction with sickness, suffering, or danger of body or soul. Let their way be filled with the light that shines from a knowledge of You and let their walk be made easier as You lead them in The Way of Your Son.

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

These are the things we ask O God, grant them for the sake of Jesus Christ.

© Amen.

PROPER SEVENTEEN

Chant Tone



Introit

Delight yourself | in the Lord,*
and He will give you the desires
| of your heart.

Commit your way | to the Lord;*
trust in Him, and | He will act.
He will bring forth your righteousness
| as the light,*
and your justice as the — noonday.

Be still before the Lord and wait
patient | ly for Him;*
fret not yourself over the one who
prospers in his way, over the man
who carries out evil — devices!

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.

Delight yourself | in the Lord,*
and He will give you the desires
| of your heart.

(Antiphon, Psalm 37:4;
Psalm 37:5-7)

Collect of the Day

Almighty God, Your Son willingly endured the agony and shame of the cross for our redemption. Grant us courage to take up our cross daily and follow Him wherever He leads; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever

Gradual

Oh, fear the Lord, | you His saints,*
for those who fear Him | have no lack!
Many are the afflictions of the — righteous,*
but the Lord delivers him out | of them all.

(Psalm 34:9, 19, alternative)

ENTRANCE PRAYER: Lord God, heavenly Father, we begin another day of our lives secure in Your protection. Accept our songs of praise. For Your laws which curb the violence of the wicked, we give You thanks. For the security of family and friends, whose love we can depend on because they love You, we sing Your praises. Direct, sanctify, and govern our lives with Your Holy Spirit so that we may live to Your honor and glory and for the benefit of others. Give us such great faith in You that we are able to answer Christ when He declares to us, "take up your cross and follow Me." This we ask in the Eternal and Holy name of our Savior. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

HERB MILLER, WRITING FOR THE PARISH PAPER, DESCRIBED THE FOLLOWING AS HOW PEOPLE FIND THEMSELVES GROWING SPIRITUALLY. People grow when they are involved in: (1) Worship, (2) Prayer, (3) Bible Study, (4) fellowship with other Christians, and (5) caring service to others. Mr. Miller indicates that 95% of Christians identify 1, 4 and 5 as important but leave out 2 and 3. "Prayer and Bible Study", (beyond the worship time) "offer a spiritual reference point for people, one that modifies their lives in God's direction." Personal Bible Study and prayer time are significant and important parts of a day. Corporate Bible Study and worship allow for the asking of questions and interaction (fellowship) in the Word.

THEME OF THE DAY:

Take Up Your Cross

INTROIT—(Antiphon: Psalm 37:4;) Psalm 37:5-7

Psalm 37 is a Maschil, (a teaching song.) It was written by King David to explain how to live, when life looks the darkest. Trusting in the Law of God, and fulfilling that trust, will ensure that we have a life worthy of God. For all the work God did to bring us to Salvation, it is a simple thing to give Him the glory and sing His praise. Singing this song encourages us to leave ourselves and trust in God.

COLLECT

Courage is a difficult thing. We ask God to give us the courage to follow Jesus no matter what it means in terms of daily carrying our cross.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON—Jeremiah 15:15-21

The people of Israel were listening to false prophets. The actual news from the faithful prophets was so bad concerning the pending destruction that it was almost understandable that they would want to listen to the false prophets. Jeremiah was very unhappy with his position as the bearer of bad news in the face of the good news being proclaimed by the others. Jeremiah pledged his allegiance to God even in the face of his loneliness. He was a social outcast and persecuted because of the message he delivered. In it all, Jeremiah proclaimed the Word of God as the food of his life. The will of God was the joy of his heart. For his faithfulness God promised that he would not be overcome by the people. God would rescue Jeremiah for his selflessness.

GRADUAL—Psalm 34:9, 19 alternative

We continue with Psalm 34:9 and 19 to remind ourselves of fearless faith which comes to us in the power of Jesus, Who established the church as His personal possession for selfless service.

EPISTLE LESSON—Romans 12:9-21

Christians are to serve God, which means to serve one another as Christ came not to be served but to give His life as a sacrifice for the many. A living sacrifice is an oxymoron. Sacrifice implies death, the shedding of blood. Yet in our Baptism we became a "living sacrifice," as we died to sin and were raised to life in Jesus. Paul tells us to look to our faith as the measure of our worth.

GOSPEL LESSON—Matthew 16:21-26

In the first part of Matthew 16, Peter makes the unselfish proclamation that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. When Jesus began to explain His need to give up His life as the sacrifice for the sins of the world, Peter proclaimed (what the world hopes) that we don't need Jesus